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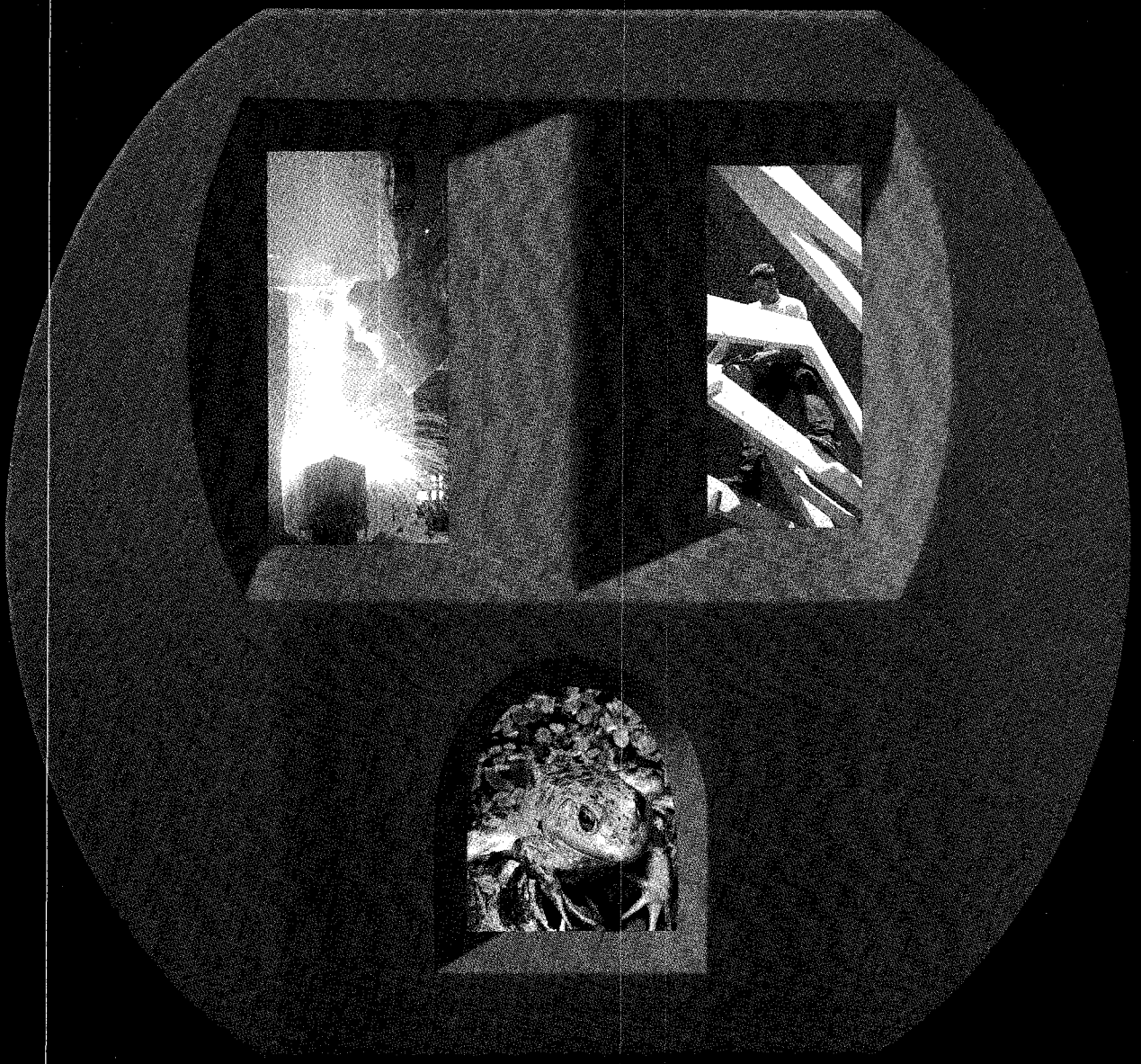

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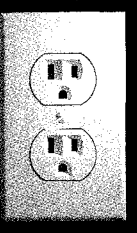

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Let's Tell the Truth

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

George Orwell's blunt assessment of political speech still rings true: It's too often "designed to make lies sound truthful...and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." Nowadays, we call it putting a "spin" on the facts.

Take the campaign to sell the American public on vouchers. Although supporters have tried, over the years, to present vouchers as a good way to "reform" public education, vouchers are quite simply and plainly a way to use public money to send children to private schools. They're a scheme to siphon off money from public schools rather than help them improve.

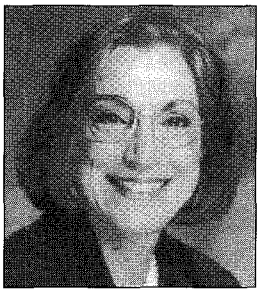
The American public hasn't bought the line that vouchers will reform public education, and they've repeatedly voted against adopting them. So voucher advocates have had to come up with some more appealing words. Two favorites are "Parental Choice" and "Opportunity Scholarships."

Disguising the "V" Word

Pro-voucher political consultant Frank Luntz gives advice about using the new voucher lingo in a manual called *Language of the 21st Century* (Orwell would have relished the title) that was recently distributed to Republican members of Congress. Luntz advises voucher supporters to stay away from the word "vouchers" because the public doesn't like it. Refer to them, Luntz says, as "opportunity scholarships, not vouchers....Fully two-thirds (66%) prefer 'opportunity scholarships,' while fewer than one in four (23%) choose 'vouchers.'" Elsewhere, Luntz repeats his advice: "DON'T USE THE WORD 'VOUCHER.'" And he tells voucher supporters to speak about "parental choice" because people like it better than "school choice": "Just as we need to talk," Luntz says, "about *children* in almost every sentence, we need to refer to *parents* even more often than to schools."

A Choice—But for Whom?

A particularly dishonest argument that voucher advocates use in selling "parental choice" is that all parents should have the right to choose a good private school for their children—"the way President and Mrs. Clinton did for Chelsea." The people using this argument conveniently neglect to point out that good private schools generally have many more applicants than places, so it's the schools—not the parents—who do the choosing. And of course they don't mention that parents can't choose what they can't afford. As one New York City parent said about a private school voucher she won in a lottery, "You're supposed to be poor to get the scholarship, but you have to be rich to use it." She wasn't seeking a parochial school and discovered that the tuition at other private schools was way beyond the $1,300 voucher, and way beyond her ability to pay. She kept her daughter in a good public school.



No matter what you call them, vouchers do not mean reform.

The favorite term for vouchers right now is "opportunity scholarships." It really means taking money away from inner city schools so a few selected children can get vouchers to attend private schools, while the majority of equally deserving kids, who remain in the public schools, are ignored. This is presented as an *equity* issue. Indeed, one accomplished spinmaster calls it "the civil rights issue of our generation."

Empty Talk About "Equity"

What happened in Cleveland shows how empty this talk about equity really is: $5.25 million of public money was spent giving private school vouchers to 1,994 children (only 664 of whom were former public school students). With the same money, the school district could have helped 40,000 children with an intensive reading and math program that has gotten excellent academic results with inner city kids.

"Opportunity scholarships" sounds terrific, until you understand its Orwellian meaning: Give up on public education in America; stop investing in it; siphon off as much of its funding as you can to enable a few "deserving poor" to go to private (mostly religious) schools, and to hell with all the kids left behind.

If a public school isn't good enough for a few of the children, it isn't good enough for any of them. Let's fix our failing schools, even if it means closing them and starting anew.

And let's speak truthfully. Vouchers do not mean reform—no matter what name you give them. What they do mean is a radical abandonment of public schools and public education. ■

Where We Stand **is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001.** **© Sandra Feldman 1997.** **Visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

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CORRESPONDENCE

Balancing act

To the editors:

If the policy of the Smithsonian were to shun any exhibition topic that might stir controversy, I would understand Jason Zengerle's concern ("Exhibiting Bias," October 20). But he misses a central point about the Smithsonian under my direction. All I ask of our curators is balance in the public exhibitions they present.

The curators of the planned exhibit, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Dialogue on American Sweatshops 1820-Present," are addressing a powerful and important issue in American labor relations and I am satisfied that they are making every effort to consult both labor and management perspectives. How this can be construed as "appeasement" rather than responsible policy is beyond me.

I. MICHAEL HEYMAN
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

I welcome a good-faith debate on my *New Criterion* article on the Smithsonian Institution; Jason Zengerle has chosen crude intellectual dishonesty instead. He implies that I base my entire argument against an exhibit at the American History Museum on a single "anodyne" wall label about eighteenth-century gender roles. Zengerle ignores much more damning evidence of that exhibit's anti-European, anti-white bias.

Zengerle uses this same technique on the rest of my critique: he pulls out one small strand of an argument, and presents it derisively as the whole. While this treatment grossly distorts my article, it renders his own incoherent. If the few examples he attributes to me are the sum total of the Smithsonian's embrace of the academic left, how does he explain Heyman's admission that there are "post-modernist thinkers at the Smithsonian"?

As for Zengerle's broader argument about the Smithsonian: his tale of an unbroken tradition of disinterested scholarship only recently disrupted by conservative meddling is pure fiction. The real revolution occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, when a new generation of curators brought identity politics and pseudo-"Theory" into the Institution.

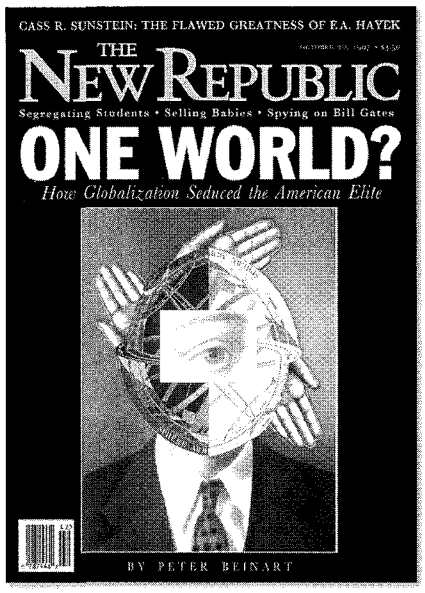
Zengerle's self-righteous defense of the Smithsonian's portrayal of "unpleasant truths about America" is beside the point. The problem is the manufacture of unpleasant *un*truths.

HEATHER MAC DONALD
New York, New York

Jason Zengerle replies:

Mac Donald accuses me of intellectual dishonesty? This from the woman who managed to overlook the Revolutionary War gunship *Philadelphia* and George Washington's command tent when she claimed that the American History Museum "features nothing on the American Revolution."

Perhaps the reason Mac Donald is so hungry for a "good-faith debate" about her article is that her most logical opponent, I. Michael Heyman, has largely avoided one. By failing to defend any of the specific curators or exhibits that Mac Donald attacked, Heyman gives the impression that her specific criticisms were on target. When Heyman says it's responsible policy to ask his curators to be balanced, he's right. But if it's conservative


CASS R. SUNSTEIN: THE FLAWED GREATNESS OF F.A. HAYEK
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Segregating Students • Selling Babies • Spying on Bill Gates
ONE WORLD?
How Globalization Seduced the American Elite
BY PETER BEINART

Kulturkampfers like Mac Donald who determine that balance, then that's not much of a balance.

Rough Waters

To the editors:

Robyn Gearey's piece "Troubled Waters" (June 30) included so many baseless assertions, distortions, and straight out lies that I haven't had the time to pull them all out. She made it a point to ignore most of the legislative efforts of the Congressional Black Caucus, singling out a few that she seemed to believe would paint our efforts as irrelevant.

Gearey's ignorance of many of the issues discussed in her article is appalling. For instance, efforts by Chiquita Brands International, Inc. to enlist the administration in the European Union-World Trade Organization banana dispute have been well documented. Furthermore, her assertion that *The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times,* and *The Washington Post* "investigated and thoroughly repudiated" *The Mercury News* series on the CIA/crack cocaine connection is simply wrong. None of these articles repudiated the basic facts of the *Mercury* series—a fact which would have been evident had Gearey carefully read the articles she cited.

I have heard from a number of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle who were approached by Gearey while she was writing her article. These members told me they were very surprised that none of the positive things they had said were included in her story. In fact, many of them told me they felt Gearey wanted to make me look bad.

I have no problem with legitimate criticism, but I do have a serious problem with yellow journalism.

MAXINE WATERS
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.

Robyn Gearey replies:

When Congresswoman Waters finds time to pull out specific examples of my "baseless assertions, distortions, and straight out lies," I'll be happy to address them.

Senseless

To the editors:

Stephen Glass's article ("Kicked Out," October 20) about an immigration law provision allowing illegal aliens to pay a fee and pick up their green cards ignored the biggest reason why the program should be allowed to sunset; it is an insult to legal immigrants who have played by the rules and waited their turn to enter the country. How can the administration justify the millions of dollars raised by a program that increases the number of illegal aliens while spending billions each year to reduce that number?

LAMAR SMITH
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.

Oh, brother

To the editors:

In "Jail Baiting" (October 20), Catherine Elton offers an indirect but unmistakable defense of statutory rape. Should it be illegal for an adult male to have sex with an under-age girl? Think again, Elton urges us. After all, aren't there two sides to every story? Sometimes the girl is the seducer. Sometimes she considers the man to be her boyfriend. Sometimes legal prosecution can have harmful unintended consequences. What's next? Second thoughts about incest?

DAVID BLANKENHORN
New York, New York

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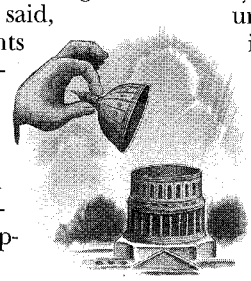
FROM WASHINGTON

Disorderly conduct

Jiang Zemin's visit to America, *The New York Times* tells us, "succeeded in grand style." Certainly the Chinese president succeeded in nullifying any hope for a prompt political opening in his country. He gave no ground in his brief, and testy, exchange with President Clinton on human rights. The media tried to depict Jiang's glancing reference to "mistakes" as an admission of fault about the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square; but Jiang's foreign minister quickly quashed that notion. According to Jiang, Mao's conquest of Tibet in 1959 was a liberation. Today, he said with a straight face, the people of Tibet are "living and working in happiness and contentment."

These cheerful lies were Jiang's polite way of telling human-rights critics, foreign and Chinese, to go fly a kite. This was no surprise. More interesting, though, was Jiang's attempt to rationalize his repressive ways. Every political tyranny needs a political theory, and, in America, Jiang propounded his. Sure, democracy and human rights are desirable long-term objectives, he argued. But the Chinese people, engaged in sweeping modernization, aren't yet ready for such frills. "Before adequate food and clothing is ensured for the people," he said, "the enjoyment of other rights would be out of the question.... Human rights come as a product of history, and their full realization requires an evolutionary process which must tally with a country's economic and cultural development level."



Let us assume that Jiang is arguing in good faith (a generous assumption). His claim is that he can divide the modernization of his giant country into two neat phases. Once he determines that a sufficient level of economic and educational advancement has been reached, then, and only then, will he move smoothly to political openness. Is this a "realistic" plan, as China's apologists in this country sometimes suggest?

To find an answer, I opened my dog-eared copy of Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Next year will mark the thirtieth anniversary of this book's publication, and if there aren't already a lot of symposia scheduled to honor the occasion, there should be. Breathtakingly original in its day, *Political Order in Changing Societies* remains the classic work on the dynamic relationship between modernization and political stability.

Huntington showed that modernization—defined as the process of simultaneously increasing industrialization, urbanization, and education—is not necessarily compatible with democracy and political stability. Indeed, he argued, modernization was a *threat* to stability, because it generated new social forces, such as an urban middle class, whose increasing economic and political demands would overwhelm the rickety institutions of traditional society. Political order in a changing society would therefore depend on the state's ability to channel political participation into strong institutions, particularly political parties.

Such an analysis helps to explain the varying fates of modernizing societies whose governments, like Jiang's, have tried to justify political repression in the name of economic growth. Some of them—South Korea, Taiwan, Chile, South Africa—are stable and democratic today because their rulers made gradual, but genuine, political reforms—and made them in time. Others—Nicaragua's Somoza, Cuba's Batista, the Shah of Iran—tried too little reform too late.

An arch-conservative and a cold warrior, Huntington was, in his way, a grudging admirer of communism. He believed that Lenin had invented a way to modernize under conditions of political stability. The Communist one-party state, he argued, was able both to mobilize new social forces (industrial workers, a scientific elite), and to manage their participation in politics, albeit through rigged elections and other repressive tactics. Huntington thought, for example, that North Korea and North Vietnam were both more stable and more economically vibrant than South Korea and South Vietnam. And, he wrote, "Surely one of the most outstanding political achievements of the mid-twentieth century was the establishment in China in 1949 for the first time in a hundred years of a government really able to govern China."

We now know, of course, that Huntington was wrong about the stability of Soviet-style communism. He understated the destabilizing effects of ethnic conflicts, official lies, and excessive militarism. Most of all, he did not grasp the illusory nature

continued on page 45

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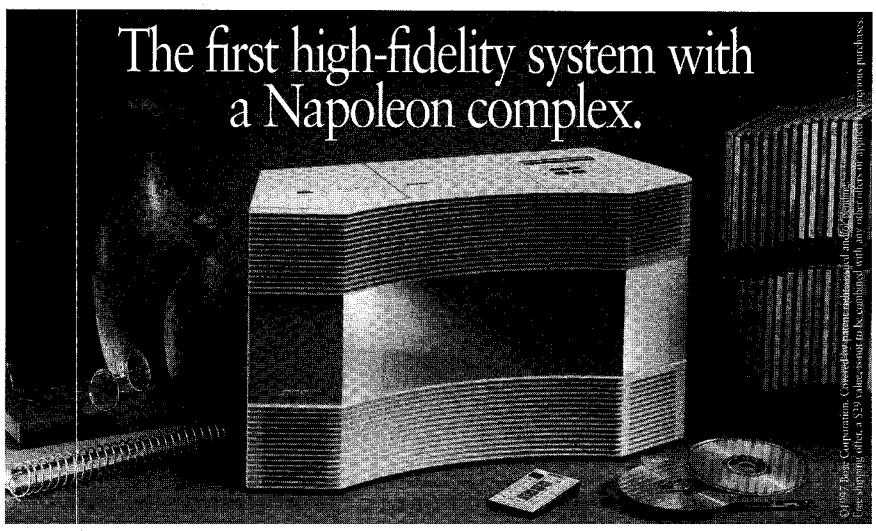

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 24, 1997

ZEROISM

Budget battles in Washington used to turn on the issue of whether to cut the deficit. Then the question was how much to cut the deficit, and then how to eliminate it. Last week, President Clinton announced that the federal budget deficit for fiscal 1997 was a mere $22.6 billion and that the deficit may soon disappear. So, now, everybody is arguing over what to do with the coming budget surplus.

Liberals seem to agree on their answer: spend it. "Additional investment is needed in education, health care, and child care," declared Senator Edward Kennedy. Conservatives are divided between supply-siders, who want to seize the opportunity for new tax cuts, and deficit hawks. A further schism exists within the deficit-hawk camp, between ultra-hawks who think the government should start running surpluses so that the national debt can be paid off by 2026, and more moderate hawks who note that, in fact, the surplus still hasn't officially materialized yet. "We need to stop hyperventilating and complete the job of balancing the budget," said Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich. Characteristically, House Speaker Newt Gingrich has embraced all of these goals at once: more spending on science and defense, new tax cuts every year, *and* paying off the national debt.

The striking thing about this nascent debate is that all parties, frugality-freaks and spendthrifts alike, seem to believe in the same fallacy. They all presume that bringing either the budget deficit or the national debt to zero is the sine qua non of fiscal responsibility. Both liberal spenders and conservative tax cutters believe that when the budget is in nominal balance, the work of fiscal restraint is over. For their part, the deficit hawks believe that the work of fiscal restraint is not over until every penny of spending is matched by a penny of revenue, or, in the more extreme formulation, until the entire multitrillion-dollar national debt has been erased.

But why should the number zero possess such metaphysical importance? The federal budget deficit is not like a credit card bill that has to be paid off. Deficits matter because they can absorb private savings which would have otherwise gone toward productive investment. The current deficit, however, is 0.3 percent of Gross Domestic Product—the functional equivalent of nothing. The purpose of fiscal policy is to achieve the optimal level of public and private savings—i.e., the largest level that can be efficiently employed in the economy—and that may occur whether the deficit is above or below zero.

Yet, the president and Congress remain fixated on the symbolic zero deficit. Rather than forcing them toward fiscal responsibility, this fetish has allowed them to escape it. Last summer's balanced budget deal included severe cuts in nondefense discretionary spending, which includes potentially productive investments like infrastructure and research and development, as well as transfer payments like welfare and Food Stamps. But now, indiscriminate budgetary slashing—*We can't afford to spend until the budget is balanced*—appears ready to give way to indiscriminate profligacy—*When the budget is balanced, we can afford anything.*

The danger lies in the future, when the baby boom generation grows old—and must rely on the tax payments of a relatively small active workforce to finance its retirement. The only way to ease that crisis is to take steps now that will increase our future productive capacity. The only certain way to do that is to increase national investment. And one way to accomplish that is to reduce the budget deficit, or, if the deficit has disappeared, to run surpluses. A zero deficit does not necessarily represent a logical stopping point.

But deficit reduction isn't the only way to increase future productivity. Government spending on investments such as education and infrastructure can accomplish the same thing. Cutting spending is not, in and of itself, a solution. The important distinction is between spending that enhances the economy's capacity to produce more wealth and income in the future, and spending that merely shifts current income from one segment of society to another. If a spending program or a tax cut is worthwhile on its own merits, it deserves to be in the budget even if the budget isn't balanced. If it's not worthwhile on its own merits, it doesn't deserve its budgetary cost, even if the budget is already balanced. The problem with the new ideas for disposing of the coming federal surplus is not that they are inherently wasteful. Rather, it is the notion that they should be adopted or rejected based on the pursuit of a meaningless numerical objective. •

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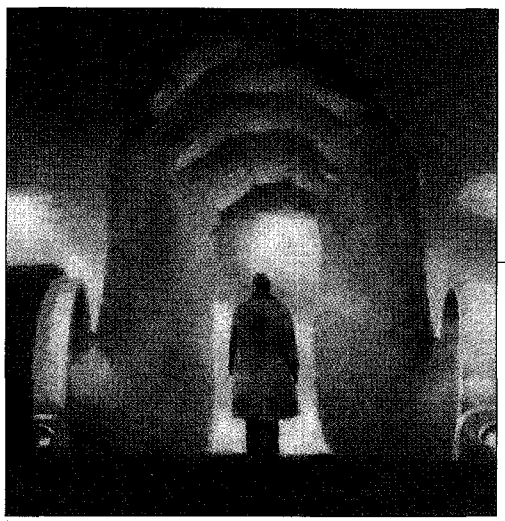

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FIXING HEALTH CARE ISN'T EXACTLY BRAIN SURGERY. (IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY.)

About the only aspect of the health care debate any two people might agree on is that the system needs work. Some might say considerable work. That said, we'd like to weigh in with a few ideas of our own since we're actually in the position to do something about it. ▪ First of all, the paramount focus of health care must be quality. It should be the only reason we're in this business–to help raise the quality of care not just for our members, but for all Americans. Which is why we're working to enable a level of health care never available under the old fee-for-service system. ▪ Of course, we can't do this alone. So we're joining with academic medicine to make the system better. That's the reason we've pioneered and allocated $15 million to fund the Academic Medicine and Managed Care Forum. An ongoing gathering of our experts, and those from more than 30 of the nation's leading universities and teaching hospitals. Including Johns Hopkins, Yale, Emory, Baylor and Stanford. Together, we're seeking new ways to reach out and help make sure patients get the health care they need. ▪ Already, we send timely reminders that encourage members to see their doctors for immunizations to prevent illness and to get screenings that help physicians diagnose disease early enough to do something about it. If at first they don't respond, we remind and remind again. Just one result is a significant reduction in late-stage breast cancer. ▪ To better manage chronic diseases, we've created outreach efforts that have reduced asthma emergencies 60%, promoted eyesight-saving laser therapy for diabetics and improved the quality of life for people with congestive heart failure. ▪ In case of rare illness, our National Medical Excellence Program® assigns a nurse case manager who coordinates access to some of the nation's leading specialists and hospitals, when appropriate care is not available locally. It's our policy and it should be everyone's. ▪ Frankly, there's more work to be done. And with the stakes so high, we're obligating ourselves to do more than our share of it. Because no matter how complex, it has never been our policy to turn our back on a problem. Whether it's that of a patient, or of an entire health care system.

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NOTEBOOK

AUPAIRANOIA: Already, the case of the hapless English au pair Louise Woodward has become a social and political parable. The blame for eight-month-old Matthew Eappen's death is getting shifted from Woodward, who was, after all, convicted of the crime by a jury of twelve people who heard all the evidence, to Matthew's mother, Deborah Eappen, who has become the new poster witch for working mothers everywhere. The condemnations range in tone from screechy to smug to sorrowful. Deborah Eappen's mailbox is stuffed with angry letters. "Apparently the parents didn't want a kid, and now they don't have a kid," sneered one talk-show caller. George Will was loftier, of course, but his sentiment was the same. "[The] preference now is for children to be a minimal impediment to two career families, that we should feel confident about and have no qualms of conscience about both parents going off to work full time," he wrote. "Sorry, we've learned some things." This is absurd. Not that it should matter, but Deborah Eappen did not work full time. She worked as an ophthalmologist three days a week, and came home at lunch to breast-feed Matthew. Her medical office was five minutes from home. Should she have known not to trust her child to a young au pair? Nannies, au pairs, and other child-care workers, whether young or old, very rarely harm children—and there's no reason to think they harm children more frequently than natural parents (or stepparents or relatives) do. Obviously, Will and the other critics still have something to learn.

A KISS IS JUST A KISS: When a traveling exhibition of sculptures by Auguste Rodin—than whom there is no more canonical, classical, even banally familiar artist, or so we would have thought—arrived at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, something extraordinary happened. As *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reports, the Mormon authorities at the institution refused to display four works: "The Kiss," "Saint John the Baptist Preaching," "The Prodigal Son," and "Monument to Balzac." All of these works, you see, show naked or partially naked people. The director of the gallery, one Campbell B. Gray, explained that this "is not an act of censorship." Fair enough. Rodin died in 1917; it's too late to stop his chisel. And Gray added: "In fact, it's the opposite. It's a method of insuring and respecting the basic integrity of the exhibit." Of course! But the man strikes us as just another lily-livered traditionalist who has allowed himself to be cowed by the libertine cultural elite. If he really respected the exhibit, he would show none of it; for art that nobody sees retains its virginity, which is anyway what these pious souls are toiling to protect. In a perverse way, it's nice to see Rodin taken captive. There was a time, after all, when the sensuality of his work really did shock. Nothing like closing down art to open people's eyes to it. Still, it's a good thing that Rodin isn't alive and working in America. What if he needed an NEA grant?

BUYER BEWARE: Morbid moguls of all stripes will be pleased to learn that California realtor Randall Bell is currently accepting sealed bids for the Heaven's Gate mansion, where Do and 38 of their shorn acolytes shed their containers last June. According to the television news magazine *Extra*, this stomping ground for apocalyptic castrati has been transformed into a gleaming dream house. "Gone are the stains left by the decomposing bodies," chirped *Extra* correspondent Kristen Sze. "Today the carpet is spotless—and the mansion, odorless. And this room—which once looked like a morgue—is now recognizable as a study!" On October 24, realtor Bell, who believes that "suicides don't have the same stigma as murders," gave Sze a televised tour of the former cult headquarters. "Look at the custom cabinetry," he urged viewers. To be sure, the property isn't for everyone. "One suicide, okay. Two, okay. But when you have 39 people kill themselves here, isn't that stigma harder to erase?" Sze asked the broker. Bell, undaunted, replied: "There was no crime.... It continues to be a mansion with lots of amenities." Bell should know. His last premier property was Nicole Brown Simpson's condo.

PLAYING FAVORITES: Steve Grubbs, the chairman of Iowa's Republican Party, has announced he'll stop at nothing to make sure that Iowa's presidential caucuses continue to be the first in the nation—and that the state retains its role as the anointer of presidential frontrunners. His strategy: vigorously suck up to all the candidates. To Grubbs, George W. Bush is a "pre-eminent candidate for president.... I think he is a conservative and I think he is telegenic." Dan Quayle "fits Iowa well." Meanwhile, Ohio Representative John Kasich is an exciting stump speaker who would "have a volunteer base out there ready to go." And Steve Forbes? "No candidate," Grubbs told *The Washington Post*, "has come further since the last caucuses." Anyone else? "[Rudy] Giuliani has an appeal to a large cross-section of voters," Grubbs remarked, adding: "I just don't want anyone to think we never invited them." Not much chance of that.

RACIAL PROGRESS:

Election divided whites, blacks

—*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 2

Race now seems less of issue for voters in Cleveland

—same paper, next day

(Thanks to Mrs. Esther L. Moss, Cleveland, Ohio) •

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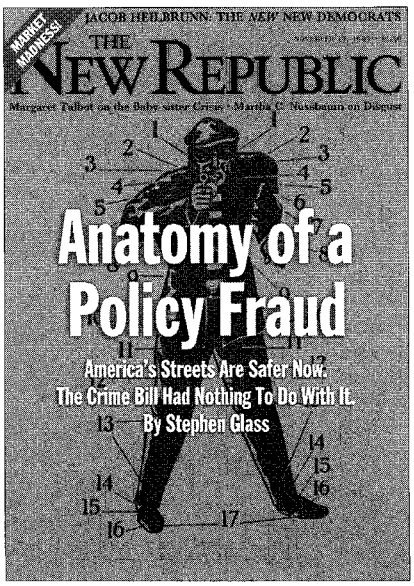
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THE NEW REPUBLIC
Anatomy of a Policy Fraud
America's Streets Are Safer Now.
The Crime Bill Had Nothing To Do With It.
By Stephen Glass

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Romance novels get religion.

BOOKS OF VIRTUE

By Hanna Rosin

Try to complete the following scene, excerpted from a new Harlequin romance, *In Search of Her Own*. Our hero and heroine, Phillip and Victoria, are sitting in a love seat on her porch. This is the first night she's invited him home:

> "That feels good, Phillip," she said softly. "It's just what I needed. I'm starting to unwind."
> "I hope so," he replied, as his fingertips continued to knead the tense cords in her shoulders and neck. "Your muscles are as tight as a drum."...
> She turned and looked at him....

Now what happens? If you guessed something like, say, "The glitter of desire burned in her emerald eyes. Her lips, still moist with wine, parted, ever so slightly, beckoning. Phillip took her, devoured her, with a force that left her reeling," you would be way off. Instead, Victoria says: "Do you suppose that's why God brought us together?" Then Phillip starts blathering about marriage, and eventually they go inside, where she fixes him the "best omelette this side of the Mississippi." When he's sated—gastronomically, that is—Phillip says goodnight and goes home with barely a kiss.

Disappointed? Then you are not a member of the target audience for the "Love Inspired" series, a new line of Christian romances released by Harlequin in September. The series is designed to "lift readers' spirits and teach important lessons about life, faith and love," says the press release. Gone are the cover shots of Fabio clutching a flushed maiden, her laced bustier dangerously close to coming undone. Instead, these modest works feature a woman in cotton-candy flannel pajamas, holding her doe-eyed son, or a bridal veil strewn among the fall leaves. Titles include *A Will and a Wedding*, or *The Perfect Wedding*, or *Unanswered Prayer*.

Jayne Ann Krentz, a best-selling romance author and a defender of the genre, says the romance depends on ritualized codes that the fans have learned to interpret. In her essay "Beneath the Surface," she explains that readers have a keyed-in response to certain phrases; "the sardonic lift of the eyebrows, the thundering of the heart, the penetrating glance, the low murmur or sigh." If those cues raise certain expectations, then the pious brand of romance is cold-shower fiction. "Are you busy tonight?" Victoria asks coyly, and the reader perks up. "I'd like you to come with me to a Bible study." Phillip is described with all the trademarks of a dangerous, bewitching hero: He has "dark, mahogany eyes" or "burnt-sienna eyes" or "dark, umber eyes" or "darkly lashed eyes, [a] sardonic smile, and thick umber brown hair," depending on the day. But the eyes are not what he uses to win Victoria over. "You know me. I've got a soft spot in my heart for kids," he says, grinning.

By introducing God, the Christian love stories violate the central principle of a romance: that the plot revolves around subtle shifts between two lovers, the hero and the heroine. God robs the hero of his chance to save the damsel in distress, and prove his mettle. At one point, Victoria winds up in prison. In any other romance, the hero would rush to the rescue, and carry her away in his chiseled arms. But Phillip isn't home when she calls, so it's the Lord's voice that comforts her. "Since my night in jail, it's like I've fallen in love with Jesus all over again," she tells Phillip later. (And this, before Phillip has heard the "L" word from Victoria himself).

Promises is about a washed-up country singer, Carla, who gets born again through her new boyfriend Kyle. By the end of the book, Kyle is dying of some rare bone disease. But instead of staying home to weep over him, Carla does God's work and stages a benefit concert for autistic children in a different city. The time comes to face his imminent death; Kyle is sitting in the rose garden, and Carla starts to open the sliding glass door to talk to him. Suddenly she stops, and begins talking to God instead. So does he. "I wish Carla could know how I feel," Kyle says to God. The conversation continues for pages, and Carla and Kyle, now husband and wife, never exchange a word.

Although Harlequin is marketing the Christian romances as something new, they are not really such radical departures. It's true that since the '70s romances have become more sexually explicit. (From about 1986 to 1990, for example, oral sex went from being forbidden to being implied to being described in juicy detail). But these raunchy bodice rippers have always had more demure cousins—books labeled "sweet" by authors like Violet Winspear which fade out on a kiss. As young women have grown more conservative, the sweet books have gotten more popular. In America Online's Romance Forum, the site with the most messages is the "Sweet Heroines" folder, where women describe their "nostalgia for my virgin days," as one put it. Christian publishers have actually published Christian romances for years, but the books have never broken out of Christian book stores. Harlequin is merely expanding this lucrative niche market to the local Wal-Mart.

The press release says these chaste books will "teach important lessons." But Harlequins don't really teach the reader anything she doesn't already know. The books' color coding and packaging serve as the print equivalent of the V-chip. The Harlequin "Temptations" series, with its scarlet covers, is more sexy than the Harlequin "Romance" series, with its pastel covers. "Romance" may mean no sex until chapter eight, while "Temptations" means chapter two. Some covers show women in backless dresses, swooning; others just a single chaste rose. The Christian series has God warnings

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all over it: a butterfly, a wedding dress, a mile of distance between fully clothed lovers.

Modern women want a more "grassroots philosophy of life," editor Anne Canadeo explains. But they won't find it in Christian romances. The stock plot—woman meets dangerous man, it's up to her to reform him—is still there. The only difference is now she has to drag him to church. And the lovers still only get married on the last page. To be truly grassroots, the books would have the lovers paying bills, changing diapers, going through post-honeymoon depression. Without the day after, it's still the devil's fantasy romance.

"He drew her into his arms, held her close and kissed her with a slow, tender passion. Then he said huskily, "Will you marry me, Victoria?"

"Yes, Phillip," she said, her voice light with joy. "Yes, yes, yes! ... And no matter what happens, we'll never be alone, because our heavenly Father will be with us and watching over us forever." The End. Thank God. •

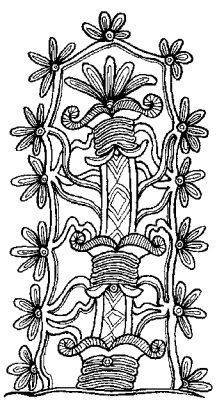
THE HARD QUESTIONS

EXCLUSIONARY RULE

By Glenn C. Loury

In the opening pages of his defense of free expression, *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill warns of "social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression"—what he calls "the tyranny of prevailing opinion and feeling." Often, Mill argues, it is the velvet glove of seduction, rather than the iron fists of legal repression, that poses the more formidable threat to a vigorous debate on sensitive questions.

In fact, there really is no such thing as "free" speech. To voice an opinion—on abortion, the Clinton fund-raising scandal, or trade with China—is to raise questions about one's underlying political values, and this can be costly. One's friends can quickly become ones enemies, and vice versa.



This is particularly true in an environment of partisan conflict. We may dismiss the arguments of a declared political opponent by saying the critic merely wants to discredit our movement, but, when one of our own makes a similar argument, no such defense is available, and our opponents can exploit the existence of internal dissension to their advantage. The "insider critic," therefore, gives aid and comfort to his enemies. So, it comes as no surprise that such critics are often accused by their colleagues of being disloyal. (What kind of Jew would see merit in Arafat's position? What "real" Democrat would support a capital gains tax cut?) This explains why, once a consensus on some vital issue is established among politically like-minded individuals, it becomes nearly impossible for those identifying with "the movement" to challenge "the party line."

I have observed this difficulty firsthand. Nearly 15 years ago, I began to write essays sharply critical of how the civil-rights leadership was responding to the growing underclass crisis. I quickly found that I had made enemies of a number of colleagues and associates, both blacks and whites. People began to call me a "black conservative," and it was not meant as a compliment. The question became, "Whose side are you on?" It was argued that, with Ronald Reagan in the White House busy turning back the clock on racial progress, only an enemy of the interests of African Americans would openly criticize the efforts of the traditional black leadership. But it was precisely because of the existence of a determined opposition that vigorous dissent from within the ranks of the faithful was so important. Otherwise, our intellectual defenses may prove too weak to withstand the partisan onslaught.

My reaction to being rejected by the racial progressives was to join "the other side." I became a soldier in the War of Ideas—a neoconservative combatant in the culture conflicts. And so I remain, though with increasing unease. The view from the right is that the universities, the media, and the bureaucracy are in the hands of a benighted liberal establishment that must be swept from the stage of history. The issue of race looms large in this conflict, for the core ideological dispute is over the necessity and the possibility of progressive social reform. So, the plight of the black poor is a major front in the War of Ideas. Persistent racial inequality provides the left with an indictment of the status quo, even as the intractability of this disparity in the face of various reform efforts helps convince the right that a socially engineered egalitarianism is a utopian dream. But it is here that my discomfort begins, for it has become increasingly clear to me that the conservative line on race is morally untenable.

Opposition to racial progressives, particularly on the issue of affirmative action, is now a key test of authenticity, and of political loyalty, on the right. Yet affirmative action, however prudently employed, has never been, and can never be, anything more than a marginal instrument for addressing the problem of racial inequality. Conservatives who bill their crusade against racial preferences as the Second Coming of the civil-rights movement display a ludicrous sense of misplaced priorities, making a totem of color-blindness, even as the social isolation of the urban black poor reveals how important "color" continues to be in American society. So, there is good reason to criticize those who begin and end their discussion of racial issues with the insistence that affirmative action must go.

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Yet, such criticism raises deeper questions. When the civil-rights struggle ended, victorious, a quarter-century ago, there was a clear need to ensure that the consequences of a century of second-class citizenship would not long endure among the black lower classes. Nothing more than a token effort was ever made to mobilize the American public behind this goal. The reason, it seems, is that while second-class treatment at law for Negroes was inconsistent with American political ideals, the nasty, brutish, and short lives of a sizable minority of the descendants of those Negroes can be rationalized as reflecting their deficiencies, rather than revealing any flaw in "our way of life." Nowhere is the ideological character of this rationalizing process more clearly revealed than in the celebration of immigrant success, over and against native black failure, which is so popular on the right. The former proves the openness and health of the system, even as the latter, however sadly, reveals the inadequacies of some to whom the system has now been fully opened.

But what morally reflective person could embrace this view as a governing philosophy for our nation as we enter the next century? •

Patent hyperbole in movie reviews.

OSCAR WILD

By James Wood

It is hard, as a critic, not to be drawn to the hysterical endorsements posing as criticism on movie advertisements. In fact, this is the only area of the newspaper I read with care. For here are the poor relations of criticism, reminding one, as in a Victorian melodrama, of the fragility of one's *arrivisme.* This is the poorhouse, the factory of criticism, and one watches with moralistic horror the syndicated chatterers, late-show companions, insomnia-healers, emotional escorts, and surrogate writers who "review" films in various media.

It is a comic, Lewis Carroll-like world, in which everything is upside down or back-to-front. Digits are giant-sized: "Two Big Thumbs Up!" A film is praised as "the best movie of 1997" but appears in February. The most ordinary statement has its exclamation mark, giving it the look of a punch line to a terrible joke: "Everything about *Boogie Nights* is unexpected!" And what is presumably the deepest expression of critical ecstasy is a mute, four-star exhalation, an expletive, a kind of curse of celebration: ★★★★!

In this strange environment, the most amusing development may be the way the word, or trademark, "Oscar®" is now being used. One gets used to the bleeping monitor of the "®" sign, stuck like a criminal's electronic tag to every movement of the word. But what is stranger is the certainty with which the word is used. Here are some examples: Brad Pitt "delivers an Oscar®-caliber performance," according to Susan Granger of SSG Syndicate; "*Seven Years in Tibet* has Oscar® written all over it," argues Dave Weber of SW Entertainment News. "How good is Parker Posey? We're talking possible Oscar® Nomination!" yells Mick LaSalle of *The San Francisco Chronicle.* Siskel and Ebert think that *The Ice Storm* is "Definite Oscar® Material," while Jack Mathews of *Newsday* thinks it "A certain Oscar® contender." Joel Siegel shouts, of *Mrs. Brown*: "I'm looking for Oscar® Nominations for Judi Dench and Billy Connolly!"

First of all, and superficially, one notices that these people speak about Oscar as if it were an epic film for which the other films are auditioning. Thus *The Ice Storm* is not so much a finished film as "material" for a future showing of Oscar; Brad Pitt delivers not an Oscar-like performance but an Oscar-caliber one (as schoolteachers used to say of one's academic potential: "you are scholarship-caliber"). But more striking is the absolute standard that Oscar seems to be. This is paradoxical. Prizes are notoriously unpredictable, and, of all prizes, the Oscar judges are infamously fickle and foolish. Yet Susan Granger can be certain that what she has seen Brad Pitt give is an Oscar performance; Jack Mathews is sure that *The Ice Storm* is a "certain" contender for a prize that is annually uncertain.

How can it be that these filmgoers know what an Oscar movie looks like? Perhaps because "Oscar" refers to nothing at all. It refers to no ceremony or system of values, but simply to itself—or rather, to the little blinking "®" sign just above it. Oscar is nothing more than a trademark, an endorsement which means precisely that it can be used as an absolute standard, a kind of gold standard. The "Absolut Vodka" ads pun on just this idea that "Absolut" is both a trademark and a term of absolute value. All the better that "Oscar" is made out of gold and has its own logo—the mutant buddha handed to each winner.

The way Oscar is used gives us a chance to see what happens to language when it is contaminated by the enforced use of the trademark sign: meaning, itself, becomes a trademark. The people using the term "Oscar" become manufacturers; they themselves apply the trademark to the goods. In the way of commerce, this is a circular activity, with no reference to reality. To call a Coach bag a Coach bag is only to do that. Thus to call a performance Oscar-caliber can only mean "of the caliber of an Oscar." We cannot have this caliber explained because the trademark *is* the caliber. Similarly, when Siskel and Ebert and Jack Mathews say that they are "certain" that *The Ice Storm* is Oscar-worthy, or that it is "definite" Oscar material, they are not saying that they are "certain" about aesthetics, and they are not saying that they are "certain" the judges will select the film. For they cannot be. They are simply saying that they are certain that they

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VISIONS OF VISION

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can use the language of certainty. And they can be certain in this way because trademarks don't fail us.

Since Oscar means only its trademark, the true prize-givers are not the members of the academy but the people who apply the trademark: the "critics" and studios. The place that the prize is actually awarded is no longer Los Angeles but the newspaper advertisement, every time the trademark is used. The Academy may think that it has ratified its possession of the term "Oscar" by enforcing it as a trademark. But on the contrary, the Academy lost possession of the term as a value of anything the moment it did this. Because simply to use the trademark is now to award the prize. To call something Oscar-worthy in an advertisement is effectively to award the prize on paper. Notice that Dave Weber says that *Seven Years in Tibet* "has Oscar written all over it." Well, what does that mean if not that Dave Weber has himself written Oscar all over the film? He has given the prize. When Gene Shalit says *L.A. Confidential* has "a cast that deserves to be decorated," he has already decorated them.

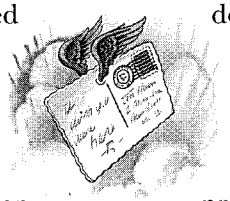
These days, the truest way of getting an Oscar is not to collect one, but to have it written all over you. Literally. •

FRAMINGHAM POSTCARD

NEWCOMERS

By Joel Millman

Not long ago, the South Side of Framingham, Massachusetts, looked much like the old industrial quarters of other dying New England mill towns. The factories were closed and the downtown real estate had been ceded to the homeless, the addicts, and the prostitutes. Inner-city Framingham was the kind of place middle-class people wouldn't want to visit, much less inhabit. But that has all changed now. On a recent Sunday morning, I walked along the South Side's Hollis Street, following the aroma of fresh bread. The scent led to the newly opened Padaria Brasil, where about 20 customers were waiting in line to buy bread and rolls. All along Hollis Street, in fact, broken glass, vomit, and trash have given way to a thriving scene of new beauty parlors, lingerie stores, and magazine shops, almost all of them established by immigrants from Brazil. Even the few surviving old-line businesses have Brazilian flags draped in their windows, in recognition of the immigrant revival.



Framingham, of course, is not alone. Its immigrant-led inner-city boom is an increasingly familiar pattern in the industrial Northeast, another example of the complex ways in which immigrant workers and entrepreneurs have helped propel economic growth in '90s America. Yet, even as many in Framingham celebrate the South Side's comeback, others say the town has to spend too much on bilingual education and other services for poor, undocumented aliens whose underground economic activity generates no local tax revenue. Critics say the homes and businesses of immigrants are taking up real estate needed by social service agencies that minister to the needs of low-income citizens who were in Framingham first. Thus, Framingham's experience encapsulates an issue at the heart of the immigration debate: Who, exactly, are the "deserving" poor?

It's certainly true that while Framingham allows immigrants to profit from their labor, it has not yet found an efficient way to tap that wealth for public use. Much of the Brazilians' economic activity takes place on a cash-only—that is, untaxed—basis. Upstairs, off the street, all over town, Brazilians are selling one another soft drinks, magazines, and cookies imported from home, or renting bootlegged videos of Portuguese-language soap operas. Other businesses help newer immigrants prepare taxes, study for driving tests, or handle the naturalization process. Often these entrepreneurs send their earnings back home to relatives in Brazil.

Meanwhile, tensions mount between the immigrants and the town's social service providers, led by the federally funded South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC). When the city bottomed out years ago, nonprofit social service agencies set up shop downtown to take care of those who were unable or, in some cases, unwilling to care for themselves. Today the immigrants want to buy up the buildings where the agencies operate, on the tacit assumption that, when the agencies leave, their clients will, too. "They're in conflict," Lew Colten, the town's building inspector, says of the two poor communities, immigrant and welfare. "SMOC, the Department of Mental Health, all these programs, they pick up houses at fire-sale prices and fix them up. But a lot of [that] housing stock could be part and parcel of the ethnic community."

Of course, as Colten notes, property owned by nonprofit organizations doesn't yield any more tax revenue for the city than an off-the-books immigrant business does. SMOC, for example, has a $30 million annual budget and employs over 500 people. Since 1985, SMOC has also purchased more than 50 downtown buildings. Although by its own accounting SMOC has pumped millions of dollars into downtown by renovating neglected property, some townspeople complain that it negates those benefits by turning the same buildings into permanent outposts of society's most troubled elements. Once a federally funded poverty agency buys property, complains Kathleen Pendergast, who chairs Framingham's board of selectmen, "the neighborhood never has a chance to gentrify."

And the demand for property from rising Brazilians keeps on growing. On the books or off, immigrant busi-

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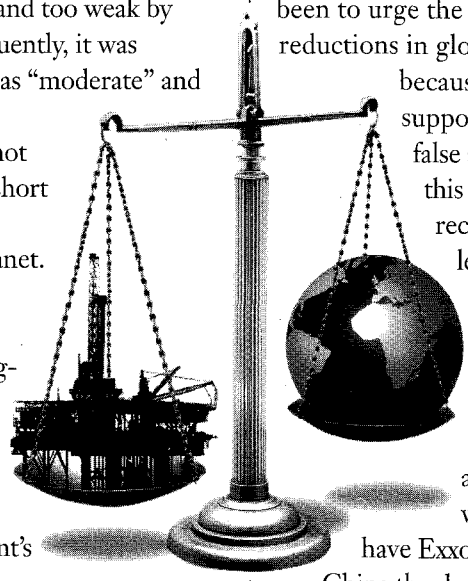
OIL MONEY THROWS THE EARTH OUT OF BALANCE

When President Clinton last week announced his long-awaited proposal for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming, it was attacked as too aggressive by industry and too weak by environmentalists. Consequently, it was characterized in the media as "moderate" and "middle-of-the road."

In fact, the proposal is not moderate at all. It falls far short of what scientists tell us is necessary to protect the planet. It is also a bare minimum starting point to allow the U.S. to participate meaningfully in international negotiations on global warming, due to be completed in December in Kyoto, Japan. The President's proposal would not make mandatory until 2012 the goal of an emissions freeze agreed to by President Bush in 1992 and endorsed by President Clinton in 1993. Despite the scientific consensus that President Clinton has himself accepted, the proposal would, in the end, tragically shift responsibility for averting global warming to our children.

That the proposal might be viewed as moderate is attributable almost entirely to a $13 million disinformation campaign mounted by the fossil fuel industry. It is a troubling sign of just how hard it is to make sound policy, even with the planet at stake, in the face of the ability of moneyed interests to saturate the media and the public with half-truths.



The thrust of the industry campaign has been to urge the U.S. not to commit to reductions in global warming pollution because developing countries are supposedly "exempt." More than just false assertion, it is now clear that this tactic is brazen hypocrisy. In a recent Beijing speech, oil industry leader and Exxon CEO Lee Raymond exhorted China and other developing Asian nations to increase fossil fuel use and work with Exxon to oppose any international agreement to control global warming pollution.* Here we have Exxon openly seeking to block in China the developing world participation that the oil industry is spending millions calling for here in the U.S.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and our 400,000 members call on President Clinton to stand up to Exxon and the other big polluters. The President should do what he knows is right and commit in Kyoto to the real reductions in greenhouse pollution that are needed to protect the planet. Putting the Earth back into balance requires it. Otherwise, we may be the first generation in human history to knowingly leave the planet worse off for our children.

NRDC

Natural Resources Defense Council: Defending the Earth

** Remarks to the World Petroleum Congress, Beijing, China, October 13, 1997.*

For more information about global warming, contact NRDC at **212-727-4408**
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nesses are allowing hundreds of immigrants to pull themselves up from poverty and form the nucleus of a new working-class ethnic community. Even while the South Side's factories were closing—and its white middle class was fleeing—the Brazilians kept coming, and working. "Of my customers, I guess maybe two hundred have already bought homes," says Fernando Castro, himself an immigrant who operates the One Stop Income Tax service on Concord Street. "Almost all of them are downtown." Castro, like many of his clients, earned his start-up capital vacuuming carpets, grouting bathroom tile, and washing clothes in suburban homes. Without help from people like Mr. Castro, many a suburban mom would not have been free to take a job—and earn her own family a second income.

Thus, in the contest between the untaxed social service agencies and their largely voiceless clientele, on one side, and the untaxed but economically rising Brazilians on the other, the town's officials have tilted subtly toward the latter. Colten, for example, has earned a modest national reputation with Operation Red—boarding up derelict real estate with plywood panels spray-painted bright crimson. The practice, known locally as "red-boarding," is a kind of Scarlet Letter for landlords. Some old properties had become crack houses, and appeared beyond redemption. Then the city red-boarded them—and sold two of them off to Brazilian immigrants.

"Fifty Freeman Street, that was one of the worst," Colten recalls. "Crack house, typical abandoned property. Prostitution, the works. We red-taped the doors, boarded it up, then levied a tremendous amount of fines." After a brief court challenge, the original owner dropped his claim and let the town auction it off. The buyers were Tony and Marcus Quintela, two Brazilian brothers who have been bottom-fishing for houses in the neighborhood. It was their fourth buy in the past two years. The Quintelas started out cleaning homes—then added offices and the multi-screen cinemas at the shopping malls along Route 9, the major thoroughfare through the western suburbs of Boston. All told, some 30 members of their extended family are employed in seven different cleaning businesses.

Active members of the local Roman Catholic parish, St. Tarcisius's Church, the Quintelas became homebuyers as soon as Tony became a citizen; they acquired their first home, a rundown two-family duplex after the local Framingham Savings Bank foreclosed on the previous owner's mortgage. By becoming citizens they broke the cycle of repatriating dollars to Brazil. Thus, when they're not cleaning someone else's castle, they're on Torrey Street, putting sweat equity into one of their own. "We pay less to own than we would to rent," Marcus explained to me, shouting over the buzz of his power saw. In a few hours Marcus would be cleaning an empty movie theater, but right now he was squeezing in a few minutes of work on the new floor boards of his restored front porch. After making a modest down payment, the Quintelas leveraged their home-cleaning earnings with a mortgage, whose terms—$300 a month—are easy by almost anyone's standards.

The Quintela experience suggests that, as the good news about citizenship spreads through their community, more Brazilian families will buy property and move from the informal economy to taxpayer status. Already, the town's registry of new homeowners reads like a Rio de Janeiro telephone book: Almeida, Amaral, Soares Batista, Carvalho, Dias, Fernandes, Pereira, Oliveira. But the list is also a roll call of urban ethnic-group assimilation. This age-old American process has its costs; but in Framingham, the town fathers seem to have decided that the benefits are even greater. Immigrants, Colten says, "are the solution, not the problem."

JOEL MILLMAN, a Framingham native, is a correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal* and the author of *The Other Americans: How Immigrants Renew Our Country, Our Economy, and Our Values.*

Congress's role in the au pair tragedy.

HOME WRECKERS

By Warren Cohen

Thanks to the miracle of live cable television, the whole world now knows the tragic story of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen's death, and, the second-degree murder conviction of Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old British au pair who was looking after Matthew. Yet in all the coverage, almost nothing has been said about the crucial role played by a little-known accomplice to the tragedy: the United States Congress.

The Federal program under which au pairs from Europe like Louise Woodward get visas to come to the U.S. has been plagued for years with problems ranging from au pairs' crashing family cars to alleged child abuse. Indeed, Matthew Eappen is the third child to die in the care of a European au pair since the program began. In 1991, a Swiss au pair, Olivia Riner, was charged with setting a house in Westchester, New York, on fire knowing that three-month-old Kristie Fischer remained inside. (Riner was acquitted and returned to Switzerland, where, like Louise Woodward in Britain, she was regarded as a victim of vengeful American justice.) In 1994, Anna-Corina Peeze, a Dutch au pair, was accused of shaking two-month-old Breton Scott Devonshire of Fairfax, Virginia, to death. (In a deal with prosecutors, she pled guilty to a misdemeanor charge.) But thanks largely to lobbying by the organizations that bring au pairs to this country, and by parents eager to preserve a source of cheap child-care labor, none of

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these incidents provoked reform on the Hill.

Led by the foreign affairs committees of both the House and Senate, Congress authorized the au pair program in 1986 and put it under the control of the United States Information Agency, the agency responsible for Voice of America and other efforts to burnish America's image abroad. This was done because the law said the program would be a "cultural exchange," ostensibly similar to other programs under which USIA annually issues visas to 300,000 foreign visitors. Some 11,000 au pairs between the ages of 18 and 26 arrive in the U.S. each year for a twelve-month, live-in experience with an American family. The only cultural requirement: six credit hours of study at an American college.

Yet, aside from a program that recruits summer camp counselors, USIA's au pair program is the only one of its cultural exchanges that carries a mandatory work component. And since the Immigration and Naturalization Service does not routinely grant visas for foreigners to work as nannies in America, the au pair program has become a de facto employment program under which American families legally obtain European child care.

Hence, the basic contradiction that plagues the program today. European teenagers, promised a cultural exchange by the program's advertising, arrive in the U.S. with dreams of learning and adventure. Once here, many find that they are treated like maids. For their part, American parents, expecting to see Mary Poppins, discover that their new teen helpers have never changed a diaper before, and that many of the au pairs chafe at limitations on their off-hours socializing.

The difference in expectations is probably compounded by the fact that European norms for child-care work are different from those of the U.S. au pair program. In Europe, for example, it is often the case that young girls assist moms with child care. (Hence, the French name "au pair," which loosely translates to "in tandem" or "on par with.") But many European countries don't allow au pairs to work more than 25 hours a week, or five hours each day. In the U.S., regulations say au pairs may work up to 45 hours a week. And frequently, American working moms are out all day, leaving their European helpers to contend with the kids on their own—a duty that even the best-intentioned au pair may simply not be mature enough to handle.

Supporters of the au pair program say that three deaths are not many given that an estimated 60,000 families have hired European au pairs during the program's existence. They correctly point out that, statistically speaking, an American child is far more likely to be murdered by his own parents than by an au pair. Still, there have been plenty of other mishaps. In 1994, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* published a three-part series documenting more than 300 specific complaints of various abuses by au pairs. These included one felony count against a German au pair who was convicted of sexually abusing his host family's eight-year-old son. (He was later deported.) Other au pairs have wrecked their host families' cars—in many European countries the driving age is 18, so many overseas teens have limited experience behind the wheel. The *Plain Dealer* also reported instances where female au pairs requested transfers to other families because of sexual advances by American fathers.

It's not hard to find parents with au pair horror stories. In 1993, Don Walter, a media consultant from Alexandria, Virginia, hired and fired three au pairs in less than a year. The first, a Swiss girl, was caught having sex with a U.S. Marine on the family couch. The second, a German, was suspected of spanking Walter's one-year-old boy. The final girl, from Denmark, lied about her child-care experience on her application. On a late night jaunt, she totaled the family car. Rather than request another au pair, Walter's wife decided to stay home with the baby. "It's not an au pair system, it's a travel service for European girls," Walter says.

Statistics showing an exact count of incidents, criminal or otherwise, as well as figures on how many au pair and family placements didn't work out, have been impossible to obtain. The eight American organizations to which USIA has given the exclusive right to recruit and place au pairs are under no obligation to make such figures public. And although USIA has always had the regulatory authority to collect such information (a power that was further strengthened in a 1995 reform), they have never exercised it. Many parents are willing to overlook au pairs' lack of experience because of the high cost of other child care. Nannies who reside in this country typically earn about $21,000 per year, or roughly $400 per week. Au pair pay, in contrast, is set by law at less than $140 per week. Though parents often have to pay room and board and up to $4,000 for recruiting costs, medical insurance, the education course, plus airfare to and from Europe, the total cost of an au pair typically comes to less than $12,000 a year. And parents are not required to pay social security taxes for au pairs.

Almost as soon as it was established as a two-year pilot program, the USIA au pair program came under scrutiny. An interagency panel, which included INS, the State and Labor Departments, and USIA itself, reported in 1987 that the program was not a true cultural exchange but a work program and should be modified. Congress passed a bill obligating the USIA to continue the program for two more years without change. Yet, in 1990, the General Accounting Office concurred with the earlier finding that au pairs are child-care workers, not culture-seekers. In response, USIA did the bureaucratically unthinkable: it asked that its own program be cut. At the very least, USIA said, Congress should place the au pair program under the Department of Labor or INS.

But Congress bowed to constituents' demands for cheap child care. The nation's lawmakers refused to redraft legislation or allow USIA to compose new regulations. Only after the shaking death of Devonshire, the two-month-old Virginia boy, did Congress bend. In late 1994, USIA finally got permission to try to limit the au pairs' weekly child-care duties to 30 hours a week instead of 45. The agency also recommended that no one younger than 21 should be allowed to care for chil-

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dren younger than two. (This is the common practice in Europe.) And it demanded that the salary of au pairs be increased to $155 per week, so as to attract a higher caliber of au pair.

Au pair employers were outraged. More than 3,000 angry parents sent letters of protest to USIA and Congress. The eight private agencies that recruit au pairs in Europe and find jobs for them in the U.S. also resisted, sending lobbyists to the Hill to argue against the new rules. Three of the organizations, each nonprofit, currently keep five registered lobbyists on retainer—just as the agency that brought Louise Woodward to America, EF Au Pair, paid for Barry Scheck and other high-priced lawyers to defend Louise Woodward. (EF Au Pair also brought Olivia Riner to the U.S.; the agency is currently fighting a $100 million lawsuit brought by the family of the baby who died in the fire that Riner was accused of setting.)

Faced with this pressure, USIA backed off. The only change was a small increase in the au pair stipend; it now stands at $139.05. It took the Eappen case to further strengthen the program. Thanks to new regulations passed in September, the au pair agencies are now required to conduct a psychological exam to ensure that the au pair will work well with children. Child-development training, added in 1995, must devote at least eight hours to infant care and safety, including lessons in shaken-baby syndrome and stress management. Finally, rather than just accept the au pair that is assigned to them, parents can now contact the au pair's references before allowing the teen into their home.

Some aspects of the program, however, didn't change. The 45-hour work week remains, and there is still no ban on under-21s, like Louise Woodward, taking care of infants like Matthew Eappen. (Though any au pair placed in a home with a baby must now have 200 hours of documented baby-sitting experience.) And new problems may arise. In 1995, Congress expanded the program to attract au pairs from all over the world, not just Europe. That might increase the supply of au pairs, because after Woodward's case, au pair agencies are already reporting a drop-off in new applications from Britain. Yet some critics fear a potential for cultural clashes because of the even bigger differences in child-care norms between the U.S. and non-European countries.

With so many lingering questions, Congress should have continued its historical practice of authorizing the au pair program for two years at a time. That would have given a chance for USIA to evaluate the impact of the new reforms, and strengthen them, before the program became permanent. But rather than take that cautious course, Congress decided to make the au pair program permanent. And President Clinton signed the bill on October 1. That probably means it will take another tragic incident, like the death of Matthew Eappen and the trial of Louise Woodward, to make the Hill pay serious attention to the program again.

WARREN COHEN is the Midwest correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report.*

The Sierra Club's strange bid to drain a lake.

WATER OVER THE DAM

By Jason Zengerle

In the arid country around the Utah-Arizona border, where water is as precious as oil, Lake Powell is a 27-million-acre-foot, man-made oasis. Created in 1963 by the Glen Canyon Dam, it is one of those alterations of nature that makes the successful human habitation of the desert Southwest possible. Twenty million people depend on the lake for water, and some 400,000 households rely on the dam for hydroelectric power. The lake has also become a popular refuge for sun-scorched Southwesterners: tourists pump $500 million annually into the local economy. To many in the Southwest, Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon Dam are testaments to man's ability to harness nature's power and put it to productive use. As a federal official who helped oversee the construction of the dam once mused, "to have a deep blue lake where no lake was before seems to bring man a little closer to God."

But to environmentalists, the dam and the lake symbolize not so much man's ingenuity as man's arrogance. In radical environmental circles, it's long been a popular fantasy to drain Lake Powell. Edward Abbey's novelistic celebration of ecoterrorism, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, discussed blowing up Glen Canyon Dam; and since 1981 the radical group Earth First! has occasionally talked about carrying out such an act. But few sober-minded people paid much attention. That is, until late last year, when the Sierra Club—one of the nation's largest, oldest, and most respected environmental groups—came

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forward with its own proposal to preserve the dam but drain the lake.

Since then, everyone from the Bureau of Reclamation commissioner to the Navajo Nation's natural resources director to houseboating enthusiasts has lined up to denounce the Sierra Club for giving legitimacy—and momentum—to the radical fantasy. Congressman Jim Hansen, a Utah Republican, held hearings this past September to expose the Sierra Club's plan. Colorado Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell called it a "certifiable nut idea." In Page, Arizona—a town of 8,200 people that depends on the lake for power, water, and tourist dollars—residents are busy organizing against the Sierra Club. "There's no place for people in their equation," complains Joan Nevills-Staveley, director of the Page Chamber of Commerce. "If the lake goes, Page goes with it."

Of course, such outrage is exactly what the Sierra Club and its president, 24-year-old Adam Werbach, wanted when they launched their latest crusade. After years of steady movement into the mainstream, the most famous of all environmental groups is trying to stave off complacency by returning to a radical approach: confrontation. "As much as we've achieved, it's not enough," Werbach explains to me over tea at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington. "We don't think that just by fighting with the same techniques, the same stratagems, that we will be able to win."

The danger is that the new techniques may subvert the triumphs achieved by the old techniques. Most polling data shows that about 80 percent of Americans now consider themselves environmentalists. Whereas only a generation ago most Americans thought recycling was playing with garbage, today the practice is a staple of their everyday existence. Even anti-environmental Republicans—chastened by the 1996 elections—have toned down their rhetoric (even if they may not have changed their views). "Americans don't really view the environment as a political issue," explains Carl Pope, the Sierra Club's executive director, "because no one disagrees. The issue is such a consensus issue that no one thinks there's another side."

And so the Sierra Club, hoping that outrage can become an organizing tool, is searching for us-versus-them issues. In today's political climate, though, those aren't always easy to find. Take, for example, the Sierra Club's current fight against changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA)—the legislation that, since its passage in 1973, has prevented the extinction of nearly 1,000 species. Although the modifications improve elements of the existing law—like providing incentives to private landowners to undertake conservation measures—and enjoy the support of both the Clinton administration and several green senators, the Sierra Club contends that the bill is insufficient and in some ways even weakens the ESA.

The Club may well be right. The problem is that its complaints center on a handful of the bill's most arcane provisions—like giving the Fish and Wildlife Service a maximum of only 60 days to object to federal projects on public lands—that aren't that easy to explain, let alone to get excited about. "There are no bright lines," says Melinda Pierce, the Sierra Club's lobbyist on ESA. "The problems and flaws of this bill are very detail-oriented and they're in a very complex law. That makes it difficult for us to talk about them in compelling ways."

The person the Sierra Club is counting on to make environmentalism compelling again is its twentysomething president, Werbach. A recent graduate of Brown University, Werbach was an insurgent even as a teen. In junior high, he organized a campaign against dissecting frogs in biology class. In college, he mobilized thousands of students against Senator John Kerry when the Massachusetts Democrat planned a Caribbean vacation during a critical environmental vote. With his heavily moussed hairstyle and penchant for quoting the cartoon dog Scooby Doo, Werbach represents more than just the Sierra Club's attempt to repackage itself as a young and hip organization. (Since he took the reins in May 1996, the group's official magazine, *Sierra*, has seen the average age of its readership drop from 42.7 to 37.2.) The real significance of Werbach's election as president of the Sierra Club is that it means the group is actually trying to reinvent itself. The Sierra Club is shifting away from its current role of watchdog, in which it guards primarily against violations of the hard-won national pro-environment consensus, and shifting back to its old role of crusader, in which it tries to generate a new consensus. To that end, the group has transferred about 80 percent of the money it once spent on lobbying the Hill to local organizing initiatives. It has created a virtual training academy to teach local activists how to run sophisticated grassroots campaigns, and a database to track how its members respond to its various "action alerts." "What matters is engaged public opinion, not just public opinion," says Pope.

But how do you get the public engaged? Most of the battles that sparked what Werbach enthusiastically calls "firebreathing activism" have already been fought. Even the global warming debate has narrowed to a fight over seemingly minor details. If the Sierra Club is going to be a crusader, it's going to need a crusade. And that's where draining Lake Powell comes in. "We're talking about something big here," gushes Werbach when the subject of the lake comes up. "If we want to actually look forward to the next step of the environmental movement," he says, "we're going to have to talk about proactively restoring parts of nature that have been destroyed." In other words: since enviros have no big battles left to fight, it's time for them to revisit the past battles they may have lost.

That includes the Sierra Club's defeat at Glen Canyon. The Club's long-time sage and current board member, 84-year-old David Brower, blames himself for the creation of the lake when he, as the Club's executive director in 1956, abandoned the fight he'd been waging against the construction of the dam. For him, the Sierra Club's current campaign is one of penance.

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But, for the organization, it's an opportunity to fight a major battle, with bold, bright lines that everyone can see. The Club's call to drain Lake Powell has garnered more publicity—an A-section article in *The New York Times*, a feature piece on National Public Radio, and a slew of stories in the Rocky Mountain regional press—than its stands on the ESA or global warming. And, in some circles, it has won the Club new admirers. Werbach is right: the Sierra Club's plan to drain Lake Powell *is* compelling.

The trouble is, it may be compelling for the wrong reasons. In its attempt to find a crusade that pits enviros against the world, the Sierra Club may be succeeding only in restoring itself to "special interest" status. Even people who normally consider themselves environmentalists are finding themselves lined up with the anti-environmentalists on this one. "I've admired the Sierra Club ever since I was a little girl," says Nevills-Staveley of Page's Chamber of Commerce. "But this is just crazy."

Indeed, the Club's drainage plan doesn't even make much environmental sense. Though the Club maintains that the lake wastes the water it loses to evaporation, water that evaporates eventually returns to the earth as rain. In its effort to link the dam to damage done to the nearby Grand Canyon ecosystem, the Club ignores many of the positive effects the dam has had on that ecosystem. For instance, a number of endangered and threatened species—like the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, and the Kanab ambersnail—flourish there only because the dam reduced the Colorado River's flow. "These species are using the modified conformation of the ecosystem to their advantage," explains Larry Stevens, a research ecologist who studies the Colorado River ecosystem. "We've had gains in biodiversity and habitat that really should be considered when thinking about river restoration."

Finally, the Sierra Club makes the aesthetic argument that the "natural majesty" of Glen Canyon is preferable to the houseboats of Lake Powell, and that if people could only know what they were missing, they'd drain the lake in an instant. "The wildness of Glen Canyon isn't well represented through legislation and policy," Werbach says. "It's something grander than that." Indeed, given current attitudes about the environment and conservation, it is doubtful that the Glen Canyon Dam would be built today. But it *has* been built, and consequently whatever majesty the canyon may have once had is likely gone.

Stevens, for one, thinks "the recovery of Glen Canyon as a biological entity is impossible." The seeps and springs that were the canyon's biological heart have been drowned. Resting at the bottom of the lake now, in all likelihood, are toxic sediments that, were the lake to be drained, could become airborne and harm people. Furthermore, the lake's water has whitewashed the canyon's walls so that, if the lake were drained, the restored canyon's only natural wonder would be the world's largest bathtub ring. Little wonder the Sierra Club's proposal has people so agitated. Then again, maybe that's the point. •

Meet Bill Richardson, global glad-hander.

AMBASSADOR FEELGOOD

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Over a thousand delegates gathered in early October at the Sheraton Chicago for the fifteenth annual Hispanic leadership conference. The gleaming hotel, towering over the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, seemed emblematic of Hispanics' growing political heft. Speakers at the conference included former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry G. Cisneros, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, and Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman. But no one attracted as much attention—or adulation—as Bill Richardson, former Congressman from New Mexico and America's new ambassador to the United Nations.

Standing beneath a row of flags of Latin American republics, the burly Richardson delivered a stirring oration on the "Hispanic moment," both at home and abroad. "We have to start thinking of ourselves as Hispanics," he said, before adding, "there could be a first Hispanic president. It's not out of the realm of possibility." After complaining that "foreign policy has been the preserve of white male elites," he quipped, "Jesse Helms willing, we will have five Latino ambassadors." The crowd roared its approval. Off the podium, Richardson worked the room as if it were a reception in his old Capitol Hill stomping grounds. He smiled for the cameras; young Hispanic women embraced him as if he were a rock star. As Hank Lacayo, a former director of the United Auto Workers, approached him, Richardson let out a whoop: "He gave me my first contribution," he told

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the crowd. "Nobody would give me a dime. What are you doing now Hankie?"

An hour later, before an entirely different audience of academics and students in the University of Chicago's Hutchins Common, Richardson explained how his talent for political backslapping also pays off in his dealings with foreign leaders. Too often, Richardson warned, "we don't understand and respect each other." Then he regaled the audience with the story of his negotiations with Saddam Hussein for the release of two Americans who had strayed into northern Iraq in 1994. As he discussed his meeting with Saddam, Richardson sounded a bit starstruck himself. "I grabbed [Saddam's] hand and his seven security guards jumped," Richardson said. "He smiled when he saw me try to grab his hand. We connected a little bit. Two representatives of hostile powers connected. That's diplomacy for me."

Indeed it is. Richardson has, of course, espoused the Clinton administration's hard line during the latest tensions with Iraq. Saddam's refusal to admit American members of the United Nations team investigating the Iraqi biological weapons program is unacceptable, Richardson says. "There is no negotiation," he told ABC's "This Week." "He is in noncompliance, and he must comply."

But such tough talk is out of character for Richardson. In 1991, he voted against the use of force in the Gulf. The hallmark of his career has always been the extended hand, not the iron fist. Where others might see enemies, Richardson sees friends he just hasn't made yet. As a Congressman, Richardson was a pragmatist who overwhelmed his adversaries—both on the Hill and at home—with sheer energy and gregariousness. Richardson's political savvy has prompted President Clinton to ask Richardson to head his efforts to push fast-track negotiating authority through Congress. As a freelance diplomat, parachuting at presidential request into tense negotiations in Third World hotspots, Richardson tried to win over Third World tough-guys by telling them that he and they were really brothers under the skin. Even when he is conducting foreign negotiations, Richardson continues, in a real sense, to play the game he knows best: American ethnic politics. "I represent a minority within my own country, as you do," Richardson once told Sudanese guerrilla leader Kerubino Kwanyin Bol. "I am a Hispanic."

Richardson's buoyant persona has certainly endeared him to the American press. In the past year, Richardson has been the subject of glowing portraits in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *New York* magazine. He's a mainstay on the New York social circuit, mixing with everyone from Henry Kissinger to Oscar de la Renta. The affable façade, however, cannot wholly disguise Richardson's unceasing efforts to climb the greasy pole. His ambition is to run for governor in New Mexico, or even to be the Democrats' vice presidential candidate in 2000; his moves, both at home and abroad, seem carefully calculated to secure those goals. Richardson's dreams may be more realistic than many yet realize: he is the nation's most prominent Hispanic politician, at a time when Hispanics seem poised to become the nation's most potent ethnic voting bloc. But Richardson's political future will turn, in part, on his performance at the U.N. And that is one place where excessive solicitude toward an adversary can get an ambassador—or his country—into serious trouble.

Despite his frequent jabs at the old foreign policy elite and his emphasis on his Hispanic roots, William Blaine Richardson himself is no child of the social margins. He was born 50 years ago in Pasadena, California. His father, William, was the Citibank representative in Mexico City, and his mother, Maria Luisa Zubiran, was born in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. Since Citibank was the only U.S. bank permitted to operate in that country, Richardson's father occupied a powerful position as the chief representative of the American business community. During his childhood in Mexico City, young Bill's American father and Mexican mother were fixtures in high society, a fact that Richardson prefers to play down today. He is similarly circumspect when it comes to the youthful days he spent prepping at Middlesex.

As a youth, Richardson was a standout semi-pro baseball player: the then-Kansas City Athletics actually drafted him for his pitching skills. Although he attended his dad's alma mater, Tufts University, Richardson remained a jock: "I liked women, fraternities, and baseball," Richardson told me. It wasn't until he earned a one-year master's degree at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1971 that Richardson gravitated to foreign affairs. A pivotal moment came on a field trip to Washington. "I went to the Senate," Richardson recalls, "and Hubert Humphrey gave us one of his orations. He turned me on, talking about Africa. I can still hear him bellowing, and I said, 'I want to be part of that.' "

After graduating from Fletcher, Richardson secured a job as a congressional liaison at the State Department, then worked for Humphrey on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But Richardson began to chafe at subordinating himself to politicos: he wanted to be one himself. He promptly moved to New Mexico, whose ethnic makeup includes Anglos, Hispanics, and native Americans. Political enemies called him a carpetbagger, but his schmoozing and his Hispanic appeal paid off. In the late 1970s, he accepted an offer from the governor of New Mexico to work as executive director of the Democratic Party. In 1980, Richardson ran for Congress against the popular Republican Manuel Lujan, who would later become George Bush's secretary of the Interior. Richardson was an indefatigable campaigner and, to general astonishment, he came within a few thousand votes of victory. In 1982, Richardson moved to Santa Fe, where he defeated Republican Marjorie Bell Chambers of Los Alamos to win the newly established Third Congressional District.

It was as a congressman that Richardson first displayed his talent for papering over differences between hostile factions. In a way, he had no choice, if he wanted to stay

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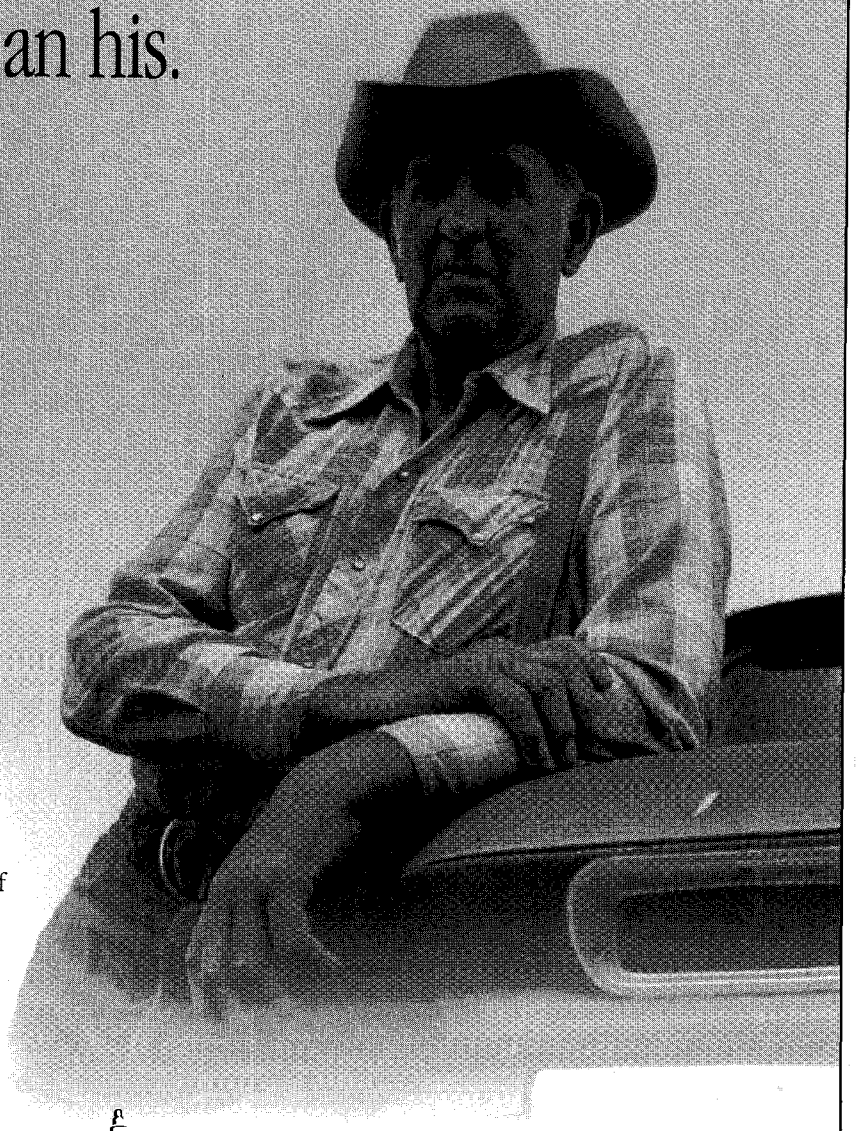
When MCI talked about "Friends & Family," They didn't mean his.



The Big Business, Long Distance Phone Companies are Ignoring Residential Customers.

The big long distance phone companies readily offer both local and long distance service to lucrative business customers. But when residential customers call to order the same service, the big long distance companies say they have no service...for them.

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We want to serve them. Even if the big long distance giants don't.

We'll connect all Americans if we're allowed to compete.

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America's Local Phone Companies

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Aren't the long distance phone giants forgetting someone? They've been allowed to offer both local and long distance phone service to lucrative business customers... while ignoring residential customers whom they think are less profitable.

Now the long distance giants are cutting big deals right and left, skimming big business customers, getting even more aggressive... while your reliable, local phone company is forced to be a bystander, forbidden to compete with them.

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The FCC should allow local phone companies to serve <u>all</u> customers. We want to serve them. Even if the big long distance giants don't.

We'll connect all Americans if we're allowed to compete.

UNITED STATES TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

America's Local Phone Companies

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in office. The bickering interests in his state included 28 sovereign Indian tribes, oil companies, the nation's biggest Sikh community, ranchers, and Santa Fe environmentalists. Richardson held over 2,000 town meetings ("I broke Al Gore's record" on town meetings, he boasts), and they weren't all puff set-ups. Whenever Richardson voted on a bill that he knew would displease one section of his constituency, he would immediately schedule a town meeting with them. His motto: "Open up. Then take the abuse from people."

Of course, Richardson also proved adept at another fine art of legislation: carrying water for ethnic interests. Andrew Athy, a Washington lawyer and lobbyist who has been a friend of Richardson's for three decades, says, "he is always looking to advance Hispanic interests, to make sure they're addressed. In private conversations and social interactions, he doesn't dwell on the fact he's Hispanic.... It provides him advantages and opportunities being a leader in that community.... Nevertheless, it's not a subject that he's constantly talking about privately. You can draw out from that what you want." Suffice it to say, Richardson had a keen sense of the value of the Hispanic vote. Richardson not only headed the Hispanic caucus, but was also chairman of the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs.

In foreign policy, Richardson's most significant legislative votes came in support of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 and in favor of aid to the Nicaraguan Contras in 1985. He had not supported the Contras initially, but changed his mind after Daniel Ortega, the Marxist Sandinista president of Nicaragua, visited Moscow in the wake of a congressional vote to cut off aid. Given the subsequent democratic denouement in Nicaragua, some today might view his pro-Contra vote as sensible—a tough stand for the military pressure that ultimately forced the Sandinistas to bargain seriously with their foes. But Richardson now says it was one of his biggest mistakes. It is hard to see why, unless Richardson thinks that a more conciliatory approach to the Sandinistas might have paid more dividends sooner.

It was through committee work that Richardson really made his mark—and it was there that his preference for accommodation over confrontation in foreign policy really began to take shape. Richardson's membership on the House Intelligence Committee gave him a reason to fly around the world on fact-finding missions. And after the House Republicans took control in 1994, depriving him and his fellow Democrats of much of their power to deliver for domestic constituencies, Richardson's best opportunities to make headlines lay in the realm of foreign affairs. This was convenient for the Clinton administration, too: according to a member of Richardson's staff, Richardson worked closely with former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to defuse problems that the administration was reluctant to tackle directly. Each side got something out of the arrangement: the administration could say that Richardson was not an official representative and Richardson could strengthen his ties to Clinton himself.

Richardson's first such sortie was a visit to Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February 1994—the first time anyone outside her own family had seen the Nobel prize-winner since her house arrest began in 1989. But Richardson's visit may have been more about personal glory than practical assistance to her cause. A staffer who worked for Richardson recalls that "he had very little staying power for any issue. Whatever is going to get him to advance his own purposes" concerned him. Burma, the staffer says, "was a case in point. We set up a big meeting. He got it. He met with her. That was the extent of the importance of the event."

The meeting briefly made Richardson a darling of the human-rights lobby, but it wasn't long before he began reaching out to groups more sympathetic to the tyrannical Burmese regime. "He attempted to appease any group he was before," says the staffer. "He would call for sanctions before human-rights groups, before engagers with Burma he would talk about the need to stay open." Others voice similar misgivings. One human-rights activist says that she was concerned that Richardson was too eager for photo-ops with the Burmese junta and that he rashly voiced the view that political change would take place under the junta's rule. Of course, it never has.

Richardson's next major mission took him to North Korea, where he arrived in December 1994, to talk about the enforcement of the U.S.-North Korean deal to freeze the North's nuclear weapons program. Richardson's visit came, serendipitously, at the very moment that the North Koreans had seized two American pilots whose helicopter had crashed north of the demilitarized zone and who were being held in Pyongyang. (One of the pilots, it turned out, had been killed in the crash.) Richardson seized the opportunity to negotiate the release of both the captured pilot and the remains of the dead pilot. With State Department official Richard Christensen carefully explaining to him what the North Koreans expected, Richardson struck a deal. Through it all, he remained in close contact with the State Department, running up a $10,000 phone bill with then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

What's disturbing about this episode is that even after this lengthy exposure to the Stalinist regime in North Korea, Richardson still seems blind to its true nature. Kim Jong Il may be starving his people to keep a massive military machine running, but Richardson told me that "Kim Jong Il's success shows a civilian, more pragmatic side" is gaining influence. What evidence is there that the new North Korean leader represents anything but a new patrimonial communism? According to Richardson, a battle is taking place between hardliners and pragmatists in North Korea, and the side pushing for "limited engagement with the U.S. will win" and "will reduce the level of tension." Again, the question has to be: How does he know? "Sure, they're still a police state," he concluded, as if that phrase sufficed to describe a country with hundreds of thousands of political prisoners and a cult of personality centered on the dead figure of Kim Il Sung. "But isolating regimes never works." Maybe not. But sometimes the best way to deal with dictatorships is

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to speak the unvarnished truth about them. That would seem to be one lesson of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's and Madeleine Albright's previous performances at the U.N.

After North Korea, Richardson's next exploit came in the Sudan in December 1996, where he negotiated with rebel leader Kerubino Kwanyin Bol for the release of three Red Cross workers. Richardson got the hostages out by drinking goat-meat dipped in green slime with Kerubino and inquiring after the leader's ill daughter. And yet, questions linger about his mission. Andrew Natsios, the vice president of World Vision, observes that "one of the people he was sitting with is simply a criminal allied with the northern government [of Sudan]. He specializes in massacres and atrocities. He's not someone you want to be associated with. We paid ransom." A top Senate staffer on Sudan is even more critical. "You wondered if he was flying to Khartoum with a cake and a Bible," the staffer says. "It was a poor man's Iran-contra." Richardson did manage to free five Sudanese rebels who had also been on the Red Cross plane that had crashed. The jeeps and radios that Richardson agreed to give Kerubino, the staffer says, may not seem like much to Americans, but "in that neighborhood they can change the balance of power. He's giving some fairly significant hardware to scum of the earth."

BILL RICHARDSON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

For all his peregrinations as a freelance courier for the Clinton administration, Richardson was also choosy about his assignments—that is, he was careful to take only assignments where he was likely to come out looking good. As a congressman, he met with Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic; but when Clinton asked Richardson to head a congressional team to monitor the Bosnian elections in 1996, Richardson demurred, citing a family commitment. Richardson had no intention of becoming embroiled in an election process whose outcome was difficult to predict.

Overall, however, Richardson was eager to do the administration's bidding because he yearned for a cabinet post. In 1992, Richardson had eyed the Interior Secretary's job, but environmental groups protested, fearing that he would be too sympathetic to ranching interests. Bruce Babbit got the nod. In 1996, Richardson, who addressed the Democratic convention in Chicago on prime time television, wanted to head the Commerce Department. But Clinton had another post in mind: U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Convinced by his mentor, Henry Cisneros, to accept, Richardson hoped, as Cisneros had suggested, that it might allow him to duplicate Moynihan's and Albright's bids for national prominence.

By all accounts, Richardson has continued his genial ways since coming to the U.N. During his first day on the job, Richardson popped down to the cafeteria to chat with the workers in Spanish and eat lunch. In the Security Council, said one of Richardson's staffers, he'll walk up to the Russian ambassador and ask, "Hey, Sergie, how you doing?"

But Richardson's desire to make friends with everyone he meets has not always served him well in the diplomatic snake pit of the U.N. The current debate over paying America's arrears to the U.N. has been a prime example. Senator Jesse Helms has insisted that American payment of arrears be contingent on sweeping cutbacks in the U.N. bureaucracy, but initially Richardson told member states that the administration would continue to push for more money. "I took him aside," says a Senate staffer, "and said, 'Do you know what you're doing? You can't appropriate more than Congress is giving you.'" Since then, however, Republicans say that Richardson has worked effectively for U.N. reform.

Another problem came with Richardson's declaration this summer that the Security Council would be expanded to include members from the developing world. Richardson made it sound as though countries like Kenya would be given a permanent veto. He was attempting to generate publicity for expansion, but he had grossly exaggerated the changes being contemplated. According to a Senate staffer, Richardson's speech blindsided Albright, and she was not amused. Helms, who had seen Albright the previous evening, was furious; Albright had to apologize to various senators for Richardson's impetuosity.

For the record, Albright has only nice things to

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Hide and seek

Saddam Hussein is at it again. Last week, the Iraqi dictator banned American inspectors working for the United Nations from investigating Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction. Then he threatened to shoot down U.S. spy planes flying over its territory. Washington quickly denounced Saddam, but, in all the outcry, no one answered the critical question: What is the Iraqi dictator so determined to hide?

Though the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) has been able to locate and destroy Iraq's stock of chemical weapons and the manufacturing facilities to replenish it, there are still major gaps in our knowledge of Iraq's chemical weapons capabilities. The Iraqis, for instance, have admitted that they filled as many as 75 Scud missile warheads with nerve agents, but only 30 of these warheads were ever examined by UNSCOM and destroyed.

Then there is Iraq's secret program to produce VX—the most toxic chemical agent in the world. Recent probing by U.N. inspectors uncovered a far more advanced VX effort than Western officials suspected. Earlier this year, the Iraqis finally conceded that they had produced *small* quantities of VX, although UNSCOM suspects that it might have made far larger quantities.

Biological weapons are another concern. For years, Iraq denied that it had an offensive biological weapons program, insisting it was merely "researching" such agents as anthrax and botulinum toxin. The Iraqis stuck to this story for so long that even some U.N. inspectors began to believe it. In the summer of 1995, only one issue kept UNSCOM from officially approving the lifting of sanctions against Iraq: Baghdad's acquisition of a substantial amount of growth media—a substance that can be used to produce deadly biological agents. The Iraqis claimed it was for peaceful purposes, but could not explain where it was all used.

The myth that Iraq had only a minor biological weapons program was completely shattered in August 1995, when Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, who had been responsible for many of Iraq's special weapons programs, defected to Jordan. The U.N. soon discovered just how little it really knew about what Iraq had been up to. In addition to the agents identified in 1991, U.N. officials discovered that Iraq was working on a host of other agents. It had produced ricin toxin in small quantities. Moreover, its scientists had researched several viral diseases, including hemorrhagic conjunctivitis, rotavirus, and camel pox. And it had explored agents that could be used against economic targets, including fungus to attack wheat crops.

Iraq also confessed to creating—and field testing—an arsenal of biological weapons. According to Iraqi reports, Saddam's officers filled 166 aircraft bombs (100 with botulinum toxin, 50 with anthrax, and 16 with aflatoxin) and 25 Al-Husayn missile warheads (13 with botulinum toxin, ten with aflatoxin, and two with anthrax).

As a result of these revelations, UNSCOM conducted additional inspections that have uncovered even more information; and it forced Iraq to destroy certain facilities that the U.N. inspectors had earlier allowed the Iraqis to keep, including the single-cell protein facility at Al Hakam, which had been used to produce massive quantities of anthrax and botulinum toxin.

In September, the Iraqis finally gave UNSCOM a 700-page report that once again was to provide a "full, final and complete disclosure" of its biological weapons program. But a review by UNSCOM of this latest report suggested that it was "incomplete and contained significant inaccuracies." Experts who follow Iraq's biological weapons program believe that stocks of biological agents are still being hidden, and that, if need be, Iraq could produce biological weapons in a matter of months. Indeed, only the constant monitoring efforts of UNSCOM prevent Iraq from once again having the ability to wage biological warfare.

The same is true of Iraqi missile capabilities. Though UNSCOM believes, after intensive investigation, that it has accounted for all of Iraq's Scuds, it is less certain about all the Iraqi-produced components. And Iraq continues to work on shorter range missiles permitted by the U.N., including an effort to develop new guided missiles with ranges of 100 to 150 kilometers. Some analysts believe that Iraq retains a capability to produce missiles with ranges even greater than 150 kilometers. Indeed, only last year, inspectors discovered that the Iraqis were acquiring guidance systems from dismantled Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles.

These could, along with other long-range missiles, deliver nuclear weapons. In its most recent report to the Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency essentially concluded that it could make no additional progress in figuring out what happened to Iraq's former nuclear programs. As a result, it has decided to terminate its efforts without closing the case on Iraq's past activity. Significantly, some members of the Security Council, especially France and Russia, have used the IAEA report to claim that Iraq has made progress in meeting U.N. requirements, thus justifying a relaxation of sanctions.

Yet this seems dangerously premature. The hardest part of making a nuclear weapon is obtaining the fissile material for it. Iraq spent billions of dollars on its nuclear weapons program, primarily to develop and build an infrastructure for producing the fissile material essential for atomic bombs.

In particular, the Iraqis were developing several methods for producing highly enriched uranium. Iraq also wanted to produce plutonium, and had begun a program to replace the Osirak reactor destroyed by the Israelis in 1981. But no evidence was ever found that Baghdad had actually begun construction of a new reactor. So it will likely take Iraq years to rebuild the infrastructure needed to produce its own fissile material.

The problem, however, is that Iraq had a viable nuclear weapon design, and if Saddam purchases highly enriched uranium through illicit channels, Iraq could build a nuclear weapon in a relatively short period of time. The Iraqis are known to have good contacts in the former Soviet Union, and Russian sources might be willing to supply Iraq with highly enriched uranium.

All of this helps explain why Iraq is so determined to keep out American inspectors. It also explains why Iraq has been willing to forsake more than $100 billion in oil revenue rather than come clean with the U.N. Saddam clearly believes that, if he succeeds, the cost will be much higher to the rest of the world—and, at least on this point, he may be right.

W. SETH CARUS

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say about her colleague. State Department spokesman James P. Rubin says that "Richardson has done a great job threading the needle by informing Congress of the need to pay our debt to the U.N., while convincing other members of the U.N. that they must take reforms seriously in order for us to pay our bills." But behind the scenes, tensions continue to exist between Albright and Richardson, according to Hill sources, over his publicity grabs.

Richardson's term at the U.N. is, of course, still young. But his handling of the first foreign policy crisis on his watch—the Congo—suggests that the I'm-okay-you're-okay approach that he employed as a congressman and special-duty diplomat may now be a liability. In April, Clinton dispatched Richardson to try to speed dictator Joseph Mobutu's departure and to persuade Laurent Kabila, the current president of the Congo, to allow U.N. human-rights monitors into the country. Tutsi units in Kabila's rebel army had tracked down Hutus who had been armed by Mobutu and massacred them; Kabila was resisting international investigation of the massacres. But Richardson, ever eager to make a splash, antagonized the South African government, the U.S.'s best channel to the Congo, by announcing Mobutu's departure prematurely. (In the end, U.S.-South African relations were patched up, but a planned meeting between Mobutu and Kabila on a South African naval ship never took place.)

In June, Richardson returned to the Congo. He urged Kabila to allow in U.N. inspectors. Kabila agreed. "We consider this a major breakthrough," Richardson said at the time. "We've made major progress on the human-rights and humanitarian fronts." His meeting, he added, would "open up a new era in the relationship" between the U.S. and the Congo. But it did not. The commitments Richardson thought he had won through warm personal persuasion were little more than evasions. Kabila continued to block U.N. monitors. Richardson had naïvely declared victory. He overplayed his hand, and the negotiations collapsed.

And so, in late October, Clinton once again dispatched Richardson to the Congo. Although Richardson was reluctant to travel back to the scene of his previous embarrassment, he returned from Africa claiming victory on three fronts: first, Kabila had agreed to let in the U.N. monitors; second, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos had promised to remove his troops from the Congo; and third, Jonas Savimbi finally acceded to demobilizing his troops. But Pauline Baker, the president of the Fund for Peace, a Washington-based organization that monitors Africa, takes a skeptical view of Richardson's declaration of victory: "I just wonder if these agreements will be followed through," she says, adding that massacres continue to be carried out.

Richardson will have none of this. He maintains that his missions were a success—yet another vindication of his personalistic approach to diplomacy. In Chicago, he told me that "I was trying to balance U.S. objectives and international objectives. I was trying to educate ... Kabila. You don't know the world, you don't see yourself." Richardson adds: "I got the team in.... I'm proud of my role, I was instrumental in getting a soft landing."

"People change a lot," he added. "I try to find out what they like—women, liquor." Richardson admires the dispatch with which dictators can operate: they have "big egos, you can get the decision. That's the plus of dictators. They don't have congresses." He also understands their psychological needs. One problem tyrants face, Richardson says, is that "many times they're isolated from the U.S. They need a platform [from which] to vent." The only dictator whom Richardson says is not so isolated is Fidel Castro. Richardson says that Castro is up on American legislation: "I found [him] to have a superior intellect. I found him [to have] a nice breadth of knowledge." Why a man of superior intellect would have chosen the losing side in the Cold War, or persist in shouting "Socialism or Death" amid the ruins of Cuba's command economy, Richardson did not say. But he did tell me how encouraging it was that he and Castro could converse in Spanish, talk baseball, dine late into the night, and smoke cigars.

But if Richardson's banalities are merely disappointing in the context of Fidel Castro's decrepit island, they could be dangerous with regard to the U.S. relationship with Iraq. One U.S. source says that Richardson mishandled the issue of U.N. sanctions by prematurely pressuring the French and the Russians. Richardson, the source told me, presumed that he could persuade them, personally, to go along with the U.S., not realizing that for the French and the Russians *raison d'état* trumps hail-fellow-well-met. In forcing an early vote, he pushed the countries into a corner. Saddam promptly interpreted divisions in the Security Council as an indication of weakness in the anti-Iraq coalition, and threatened war.

With Saddam now trying to bar American members of a U.N. weapons team, the limitations of Richardson's nostrums about mutual understanding are even more evident. Yet he seems loathe to abandon them. Only a few weeks before the crisis, Richardson was stressing the deficiencies of America's approach to Saddam's part of the world: "We have right now a weak relationship with the Arab world," Richardson told his audience at the University of Chicago. "It's one of our biggest weaknesses. Muslim radicalism has separated us from the biggest growing mass of people. We have to do better."

There was something endearing about the spectacle of Richardson, who cheerfully admits he was an indifferent student, fending off a fusillade of questions from the earnest Chicago undergraduates. "Jesus, this guy knows his stuff," Richardson said as he fielded a student's tough question about American policy on Israeli settlements in the West Bank. It was vintage Richardson. Self-deprecating, cheerful, appealing—it was the kind of remark that makes you like the man, but wonder, as a former aide puts it, "is he really ready for the next big step?" •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Verdicts and Appeals

Two recent events—of somewhat different stature—accidentally coincided. Roger Ebert wrote an Op-Ed piece in *The New York Times* proposing that the Pulitzer board initiate an annual prize for an American film. And this year's Nobel Prize for Literature went to Dario Fo.

Ebert's argument was sound and may, I hope, have some effect. Intrinsically, prizes are meaningless: no rational person would defend such an absolute as "the best" film or novel of the year. One can only vote for preferences, which are not quite the same thing as "best." Still, an award is a recognition of the importance of a field and a means of celebrating it. Pulitzer people, please pay attention to Ebert's idea.

Fo's Nobel award caused ructions. He is an unabashed radical, a partisan of anti-establishment causes who has written much to advance his beliefs and social criticisms. Thus, in Italy and elsewhere, those whose minds were already made up about him politically were or were not pleased by his prize.

I admit some discomfort about it, for other reasons. I've read several of Fo's (many) plays, have seen several others, and have twice seen Fo himself, a gifted performer, in some of his solo work. My discomfort is not political. If the Nobel prize was to be given to a dramatist, how could Fo be named before Harold Pinter? As far as I know Fo's writings, any comparison of them with Pinter's work is not kind to Fo.

I'd also suggest Peter Handke except that his recent nuttiness about Serbia is a real obstacle: one could not give him a prize—he is both a dramatist and a novelist of extraordinary quality—without seeming, just now, to endorse his politics. (Though a different political resonance didn't impede the award to Fo.)

But Ebert's article made me think of the whole Nobel discussion in terms of film. The Nobel rules allow for only one award in the arts, so all the other arts have grounds for protest. I concentrate here on film, partly because it has ties to literature, and certainly some relation to playwriting.

Lately I watched the broadcast of this year's American Film Institute award dinner for Martin Scorsese, and among the guests to honor Scorsese was Michelangelo Antonioni. He stood up, slim, white-haired, 85—his wife spoke for him because his speech is impaired by a stroke—a figure of historical importance who is still among us. His image came to mind when I read the Fo announcement. Can it possibly be argued by any qualified person that Fo is a superior artist to Antonioni? If it is contended that film is a collaborative art and that Antonioni's chief screenplay co-author, Tonino Guerra, would have to be honored too, how would that differ substantively from the multiple awards to collaborators in science?

Then there is Ingmar Bergman. Akira Kurosawa.

Apparently the Nobel people can institute awards if they choose: the prize in economic science was begun in 1969. Film awaits recognition. It's an old game (I once played it myself in these pages) to list the names of Nobel literature laureates who are now utterly forgotten, along with the names of giants who were ignored. But it's worth risking prophecy: the world can reasonably expect that within, say, 30 years, Fo will be only a respected name in theater chronicles, while the art of Antonioni and Bergman and Kurosawa will still be vitally present.

Released simultaneously with the somewhat embarrassing visit of Jiang Zemin, **Red Corner** (MGM) is a countervailing embarrassment. The screenplay by Robert King gives us a hotshot American businessman, Richard Gere, who is in Beijing to sell a TV series to the Ministry of Television. (The film was shot in a China designed by the excellent Richard Sylbert and built in Culver City.) Gere agrees with the ministry's judgment of his series as pornographic and tawdry: his sales point is that the communist government would benefit from showing the Chinese people how decadent the United States has become through democracy and free enterprise. Seemingly, this pitch has some effect, but since it happens early in the film, we know there is going to be trouble.

In a big gaudy nightclub, Gere meets an attractive young Chinese woman. They mesh so easily and repair to her very luxe apartment so quickly that again we know there will be trouble. It arrives before morning—a murder with Gere as the accused.

Of course, he is not the killer. The

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Beaumarchais, the Scoundrel. *A pleasant if unscintillating rendition of a fabulous eighteenth-century life. The author of* The Barber of Seville *and* The Marriage of Figaro *did a lot more than write plays. (Reviewed 11/17/97)* **Boogie Nights.** *People making porno films in L.A. in the late 1970s. The writing and directing by Paul Thomas Anderson, plus the acting, treat that subject with such scathing honesty that some large American darknesses are hinted at. (11/10/97)* **In the Company of Men.** *A Restoration comedy up to date. Neil LaBute's debut film is a cruel comedy about a prank that two men play on a young woman. First-class in every way. (9/1/97)* **Mrs. Brown.** *The mystery of Queen Victoria's relationship with her Scottish groom John Brown is engagingly explored, though left, as it must be, unsolved. (8/4/97)*—**SK**

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complicated and murky twists of the plot are eventually worked through; en route, we see Gere's imprisonment in various vile cells, his interrogation with various degrees of violence, some attempts on his life, and the fumblings of the U.S. Embassy person assigned to help him—a man at least as interested in public relations with China as in Gere's fate.

The lawyer assigned by the Chinese state to defend Gere is, by an extraordinary coincidence, an attractive young woman who speaks English. (Bai Ling, humane and competent.) Since she remained silent during the Cultural Revolution when her parents were humiliated, she is determined to speak out for justice in Gere's case, once she is convinced of his innocence. If he pleads guilty, he will be let off with a life sentence; if he refuses, he will almost certainly be found guilty and sentenced to death. Lawyer and client decide to plead the truth: not guilty. This irritates Chinese officialdom.

Gere has often given affecting performances; here he is merely the star doing his job. We never feel that he is really facing near-certain execution. The rip-roaring adventures—the beatings he survives, the fleeing over rooftops—are all star bunkum, more of the mythology in which an ordinary man living a conventional life takes on physical challenges like a combination circus strongman and circus acrobat.

But the real embarrassment of the film is in its treatment of the libertarian lawyer who is vocal against Chinese oppression. If there were a Chinese ACLU, she would be a member. As is, the idea that she is allowed to work and to speak freely—to live—strains credulity. (Gere himself has led protests about Chinese practices, but he accepts this fantasizing script.)

I suppose I mustn't disclose the ending. Let's just say that the film stoutly keeps up its embarrassments right to the finish. •

The Professor of Desire

BY ALAN WOLFE

Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life by James H. Jones

(Norton, 937 pp., $39.95)

I.

Nothing in the background of Alfred C. Kinsey seemed likely to produce a man who would devote his life to the study of sex. He was born in 1894 and grew up in unbohemian Hoboken and South Orange, New Jersey, the son of a self-made shop teacher at the Stevens Institute of Technology. He was an Eagle Scout. A sickly boy, Kinsey worked diligently to please his repressive, dictatorial, sanctimonious, and ambitious father. That proved to be an impossible task. Turning his back on a career in engineering, Kinsey dropped out of Stevens to attend Bowdoin College. There he discovered that his impulse to collect things, when connected to his love of nature, made him a taxonomist—a biologist seeking to understand the world through patient observation rather than through experimentation or the newly emerging mathematics of population ecology. An accomplished, hard-working student, Kinsey took his doctorate at Harvard before assuming an assistant professorship at the then second-rate Indiana University.

Taxonomists, as James Jones patiently explains, were divided into "lumpers" and "splitters." Lumpers, the dominant group, believed that there were relatively few species in nature, so that the task of the scientist became one of classifying individual organisms into pre-existing categories. Kinsey strongly dissented from this Platonic essentialism. In his view, most attempts to designate distinct species owed more to the scientist's need to bring order to reality than to the diversity of life itself. Kinsey focused his research on gull wasps, tiny parasitic insects that leave growths on their hosts, most commonly oak trees. Splitter that he was, he reasoned that the more gull wasps he collected, the more new species he could identify. So collect he did—all over the country, then all over the world. Kinsey seemed very much the typical Midwestern academic. He married Clara Bracken McMillen, an Indiana University undergraduate whom he met during his job interview, and before long they owned a large house in town and pro-

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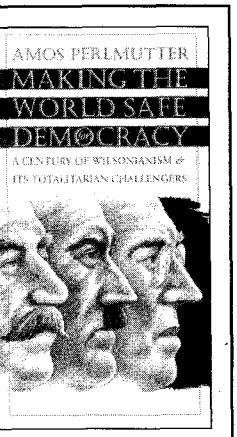

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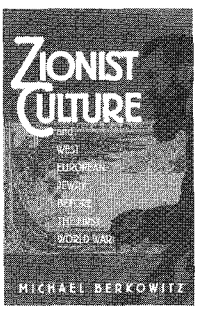

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duced four children. He published his research on gull wasps with Indiana University Press to a few generally positive reviews, and wrote a textbook designed to make money.

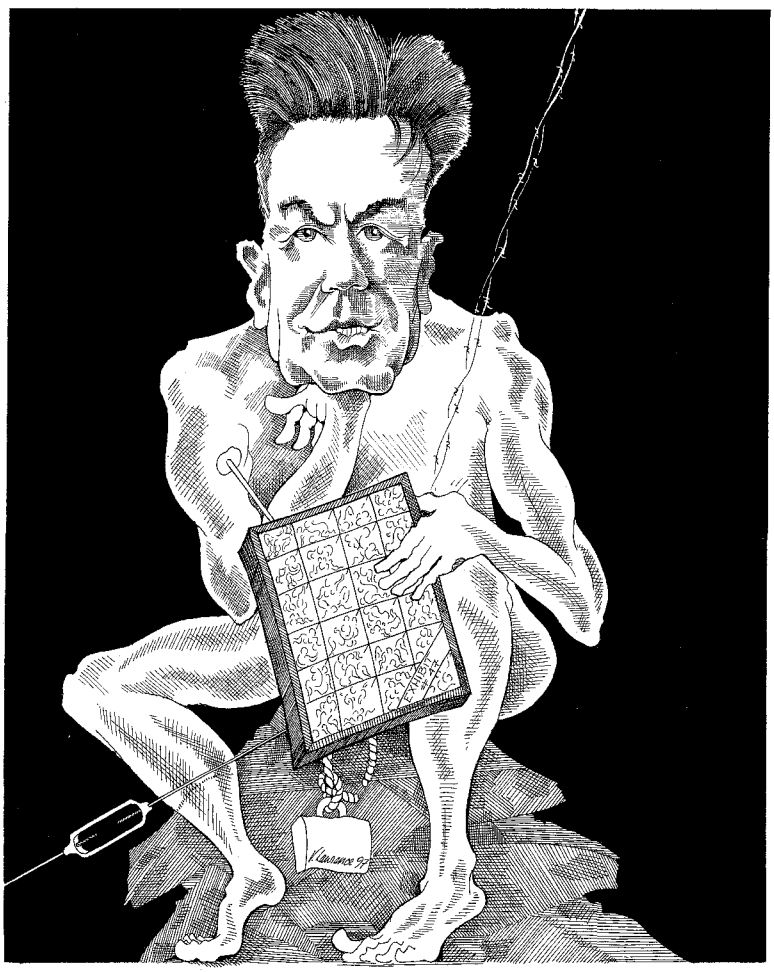
Yet not all was well with his career. For one thing, he had committed himself to a very old-fashioned kind of science; Kinsey, said Robert Kroc, one of his younger colleagues (and the brother of Ray Kroc, the entrepreneur who created MacDonald's), was the first scientist he ever met who studied evolution outside the laboratory. Moreover, Indiana University suffered under the reign of an old president more interested in settling scores than in advancing the prestige of his institution. And, perhaps to Kinsey's chagrin, no offers from elite institutions came his way. Still, Kinsey was keeping busy. His voracious work habits had led him to read whatever sex manuals he could find. "You know, there isn't much science here," he told Kroc. In 1937, the trustees of Indiana University appointed a new president named Herman Wells; and when students began to agitate Wells for more relevant sex education, Kinsey volunteered, and was asked to design a course on marriage.

Kinsey's expertise in biology colored the course from the start. He appeared to be teaching just the facts of nature; but he presented himself as a scientist, and so he was quite graphic in his depiction of sexual organs and sexual acts, and he claimed to be entirely non-judgmental about human sexual practices. Ultimately the explicitness of the course aroused the opposition of many on campus, and by 1940 Kinsey was forced to withdraw from it. But by then the die was cast.

Kinsey had transformed himself into a sex researcher. He would never again teach a marriage course—indeed, within a few years he would not teach at all. Kinsey was rescued from his professional malaise by the Committee for Research in Problems of Sex, a standing committee of the National Research Council. The Rockefeller Foundation, which financed the NRC, had for years been seeking to shift the work of the CRPS in the direction of human sexuality. Kinsey appeared as a godsend to Robert Yerkes, the NRC's director, who now could appease Rockefeller with a serious scientist in command of extensive data concerning human sexual behavior.

For Kinsey had not just been teaching about sexuality. As part of his course on marriage, he had begun to administer a questionnaire to students asking them about their sexual experiences; and this was eventually transformed into a face-to-face interview. Flush with his success at eliciting information, Kinsey interviewed everyone he could find. He had even gone to Chicago and won the trust of its very suspicious homosexual community. By the time he approached Yerkes, Kinsey had obtained the sexual histories of more people than anyone else in history. His collection would soon include Yerkes himself. Inviting his funders to Bloomington, Kinsey told them that they could not appreciate his interviewing skills unless they agreed to provide their sexual histories. Remarkably, Yerkes and his two colleagues agreed.

Within six years the Rockefeller Foundation would be making huge grants to Kinsey to support his Institute for Sex Research. Wells, the university's president, was thrilled; but he was also wary, and so he encouraged the Institute to establish itself as an independent corporation. It came into existence officially in 1947. Kinsey's relations with his backers were never smooth. Determined to reap the prestige of the Rockefeller name, Kinsey trumpeted his relationship with the Foundation, alienating Yerkes and violating the gentlemanly code of discretion to which foundation trustees adhere. Ultimately the Foundation, under pressure from conservatives in Congress, would drop Kinsey. But by then he had published his books, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948, and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953.



ALFRED C. KINSEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Kinsey brought out the results of his sex research with a medical publisher, and he laced his account with dense prose and technical terms, but everyone knew these books would be best-sellers; and their sales exceeded the wildest expectations. Clearly large numbers of Americans were ready to receive the news that nothing erotic ought to be alien to them. Now famous and rich, Kinsey no longer needed Rockefeller patronage. Yet he never raised much money after the Foundation withdrew its support; many interlocutors introduced Kinsey to rich potential donors, but he was a terrible fund-raiser, unable to "close" a deal by making the crucial "ask" for funds.

Kinsey died in 1956 a frustrated and angry man. He had failed to complete his lifework: volumes on topics including homosexuality, prostitution, Negro sex, and sex offenders were planned. And the critics had already begun to wield their knives. Such distinguished representatives of American letters as Margaret Mead, Geoffrey Gorer, Lionel Trilling, and Lawrence Kubie were critical of Kinsey's books. America had entered the golden age of the Eisenhower years. The country did not seem interested in replacing its religious and moral prohibitions on sex with Kinsey's naturalistic, anything-goes advice.

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II.

Within fifteen years of Kinsey's funeral, the Food and Drug Administration approved a birth control pill, *Penthouse* made its first appearance in England, Johns Hopkins became the first American medical school to perform sex change operations, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury blossomed, *Human Sexual Response* by Masters and Johnson was published, topless waitresses became the rage, new movies such as *I am Curious Yellow* portrayed new levels of sexual explicitness, the Stonewallers rioted in Greenwich Village, and Kate Millett wrote *Sexual Politics*.

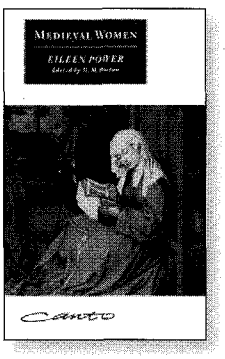
We now know from Jones's book that Kinsey anticipated the sexual revolution not only by what he wrote, but also by what he did. There was a private life behind the public figure—and, we are frequently told, a shocking one. A workaholic and a man of authoritarian temper, Kinsey employed a number of graduate students who were expected to share his passion for long workdays and to accompany him on field trips. An inveterate exhibitionist, he would frequently walk around naked in camp. His surviving letters reveal a scatological Kinsey, a man fascinated with burlesque shows, graphic descriptions of sexual acts, and juvenile sexual boasting. An atmosphere of homoeroticism pervaded these all-male field trips, Jones writes: "It is not hard to suspect that oral sex was going down under canvas tops." (Jones's language in that sentence is especially unfelicitous.) Jones is convinced that Kinsey had fallen in love with one of his students, Ralph Voris, and that he had designs on others as well. No wonder he wanted so much to study Chicago's gay community, for there "he could slip away and engage in furtive, anonymous sex with the crowd that patronized Chicago's 'tea rooms,' slang for the public urinals frequented by homosexuals interested in quick, impersonal, faceless sex."

Voris died young, but soon thereafter Kinsey found "the third and final love" of his life: Clyde Martin. According to Jones, Martin resisted, and suggested sex with Kinsey's forty-two year old wife (and first love) Clara. The world's most famous sex researcher quickly agreed. Martin would be only the first of her many extramarital lovers, most of them taken with Kinsey's permission—if not his active encouragement. Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research was rapidly turning into a free sex zone. Martin, who was hired as an interviewer and would later be listed as one of the authors of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, watched helplessly as his wife began an affair with Paul Gebhard, another member of Kinsey's staff. And the third chief interviewer, Wardell Pomeroy, was the most promiscuous of them all, "a kind of equal opportunity Don Juan" who would sleep with as many people of either sex as he could.

For all his kinkiness, however, Kinsey was not Pomeroy. Indeed, Kinsey appears to have had very few lovers, male or female. Kinsey got his pleasure indirectly: "Watching others have sex satisfied both the scientist and the voyeur in Kinsey," Jones writes. Take those interviews. It is not hard to conclude that Kinsey's desire to interview everyone he could find was his version of Leporello's catalogue aria: he was excited by the conquests in other people's sex lives. But Kinsey was not just a metaphorical voyeur. In 1949 Kinsey hired a photographer for his staff, and his job was to film the members of Kinsey's circle having sex with each other and masturbating for the camera.

The newly hired photographer, William Dellenback, later told Jones about Kinsey's deeply ingrained masochism. In front of the camera, Kinsey would take an object such as a swizzle stick, place it into the urethra of his penis, tie up his scrotum with a rope, and then pull on the rope as he pushed the object in deeper. Masochism, Jones informs his

Canto



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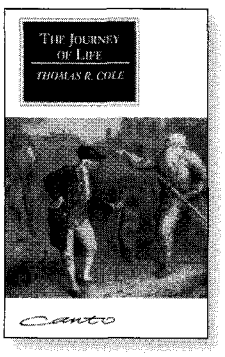

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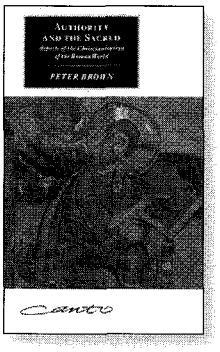

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readers, is like a drug addiction; once the masochist gets accustomed to a certain level of pain, more intense techniques have to be found. That explains why Kinsey once circumcised himself without anesthesia—or why, on another occasion, he tied the usual knot around his scrotum but then threw the other end of the rope over a pipe, took it with his hand, jumped off a chair, and hung there in the air as the pressure increased.

If Kinsey's private sexual habits were extreme, so were some of his public views. A man on a mission, Kinsey would bring to sex the same concern for efficiency and technique that Frederick Winslow Taylor, another student at the Stevens Institute of Technology, brought to industrial production. Like all revolutionaries, Kinsey was reluctant to find enemies among those who shared any part of his agenda. Sympathetic to prisoners arrested for sex crimes, he would ultimately come to believe that even pedophiles were unfairly persecuted. Incest, including child abuse, Kinsey seemed to suggest, was much ado about nothing; so long as children did not make a big deal of their experiences, no real harm, he believed, could come to them. Kinsey, Jones concludes, "saw civilization as the enemy of sex." In his life and his work, Kinsey was, according to Jones, "the architect of a new sensibility about a part of life that everyone experiences and no one escapes."

III.

James H. Jones's book, a quarter-century in the making, is a fascinating account of a fantastic American. Jones, the author of a previous book on the Tuskegee experiment, is a historian with a knack for writing books about the past that are bound to be discussed in the present. He is not a great stylist, but he manages to hold his reader's attention as he moves exhaustively through a proliferation of increasingly peculiar detail. Yet what held my attention most has little to do with the sensational side of Kinsey's sex life. Jones's discussion of such matters as the controversies around Kinsey's methodology and the politics of foundation support are far more interesting than his accounts of how Kinsey wrestled with his own libido.

Erotic arousal, Kinsey and his coauthors wrote regretfully in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, "could be subject to precise instrumental measurement if objectivity among scientists and public respect for scientific research allowed such laboratory investigation." Since it did not, Kinsey had to settle for accounts that people themselves provided about their sexual lives. Kinsey took great pains to convince his readers that interviews could be an effective substitute for laboratory observations. In a general sense, he was right: selected carefully and interviewed correctly, we can learn much from people about human sexual behavior.

But Kinsey was careless in his selection. What, for example, constitutes an orgasm? Ever the splitter, Kinsey rejected the uniform descriptions of orgasm that he found in marriage manuals in favor of a six-point orgasm scale, ranging from primarily genital reactions (22% frequency) to "extreme tension with violent convulsion" in which "the legs often become rigid, with muscles knotted and toes pointed ... breath held or gasping, eyes staring hard and tightly closed ... whole body or parts of it spasmodically twitching, sometimes synchronously with throbs or violent jerking of the penis" (16%). His source for this simultaneously clinical and pornographic description was "adult observers for 196 preadolescent boys"—pedophiles, one presumes, observing very closely indeed.

Moving from definition to classification, Kinsey and his colleagues described the frequency of orgasm among men by age, social class, occupation, and religion. (Orthodox Jews, he found, were the least sexually active people in America.) Again, Kinsey was instinctively attracted to the unrepresentative, such as men who were unusually sexually active. "Our large sample," the authors wrote, "shows that, far from being rare, individuals with frequencies of 7 or more [sex acts] per week constitute a considerable segment (7.6%) of any population." Was it reality or fantasy that led Kinsey to pen this sentence: "Where the occupation allows the male spouse to return home at noon, contacts may occur at that hour of the day, and, consequently, there is a regular outlet of fourteen to twenty-one times per week"? And so it went. Between 92% and 97% of American males masturbate. "The number of college-bred males who have some premarital intercourse is high enough to surprise many persons." Use of prostitutes was common, if unevenly distributed by social class. 37% of men experienced orgasm through homosexual contact at least once in their lives. Finally, there was sex with animals, "the only chapter in the book," wrote Lionel Trilling, "which hints that sex may be touched with tenderness." But even here Kinsey was precise: "The accumulative incidence figures for animal intercourse go to about 14 per cent for the farm boys who do not go beyond grade school, to about 20 per cent for the group which goes into high school but not beyond, and to 26 per cent for the males who will ultimately go to college."

Kinsey informed his readers that he had collected 5,300 sexual histories, "forty times as much material as was included in the best of previous studies." This may have impressed the general reader, but no scientist could be taken in by Kinsey's boasting. Utterly eclectic in his methods, Kinsey interviewed wildly disproportionate numbers of college students, prisoners, people willing to be interviewed, and people preoccupied with sex. He could have multiplied his interviews by a hundred and still have come away with a group of Americans whose sexual conduct would have been abnormal. By the late 1940s, statisticians had discovered that scientific sampling was far more effective in representing a given population than exhaustive but futile efforts to interview everyone. Yet Kinsey refused to engage in proper sampling techniques, making it impossible for him to make even near-accurate generalizations about the distribution of sexual behaviors among the American population.

Kinsey's approach to sex was as scientific as *Peyton Place*. And since his methods were so poor, Kinsey and his coauthors left their readers with the impression that there was far more sex taking place in America, and far more exotic sex, than corresponded to the real life experiences of those readers. The message was that people should listen to Kinsey rather than to their conscience, their God, or their superego. It was quite explicit in Kinsey's text: a wide variety of sexual activities "may seem to fall into categories that are as far apart as right and wrong, licit and illicit, normal and abnormal, acceptable and unacceptable in our social organization. In actuality, they all prove to originate in the relatively simple mechanisms which provide for erotic response when there are sufficient physical or psychic stimuli." Properly instructed by Kinsey's improper data, they would be free to engage in premarital sex, pursue extramarital affairs, act out their homoerotic fantasies, and jettison whatever inhibitions prevented them from claiming their share of the Gross National Orgasm.

In theory, peer review should have stopped Kinsey from embarrassing his discipline, his university, and himself. Yet the Rockefeller Foundation continued to pour money into his coffers. Periodic appraisals of his work commissioned by the Foundation never raised the issue of sampling, or did so only to back off. Responding to the concern of Kinsey's editor that the statistics be "bullet proof"

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against attack, Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation assured him that Kinsey's methods had been thoroughly reviewed by experts; he also agreed to write a preface endorsing Kinsey's investigations as "sincere, objective, and determined." Kinsey even survived, for a time, a review of his data commissioned by the American Statistical Association that was carried out by three of the most high-powered statisticians in America.

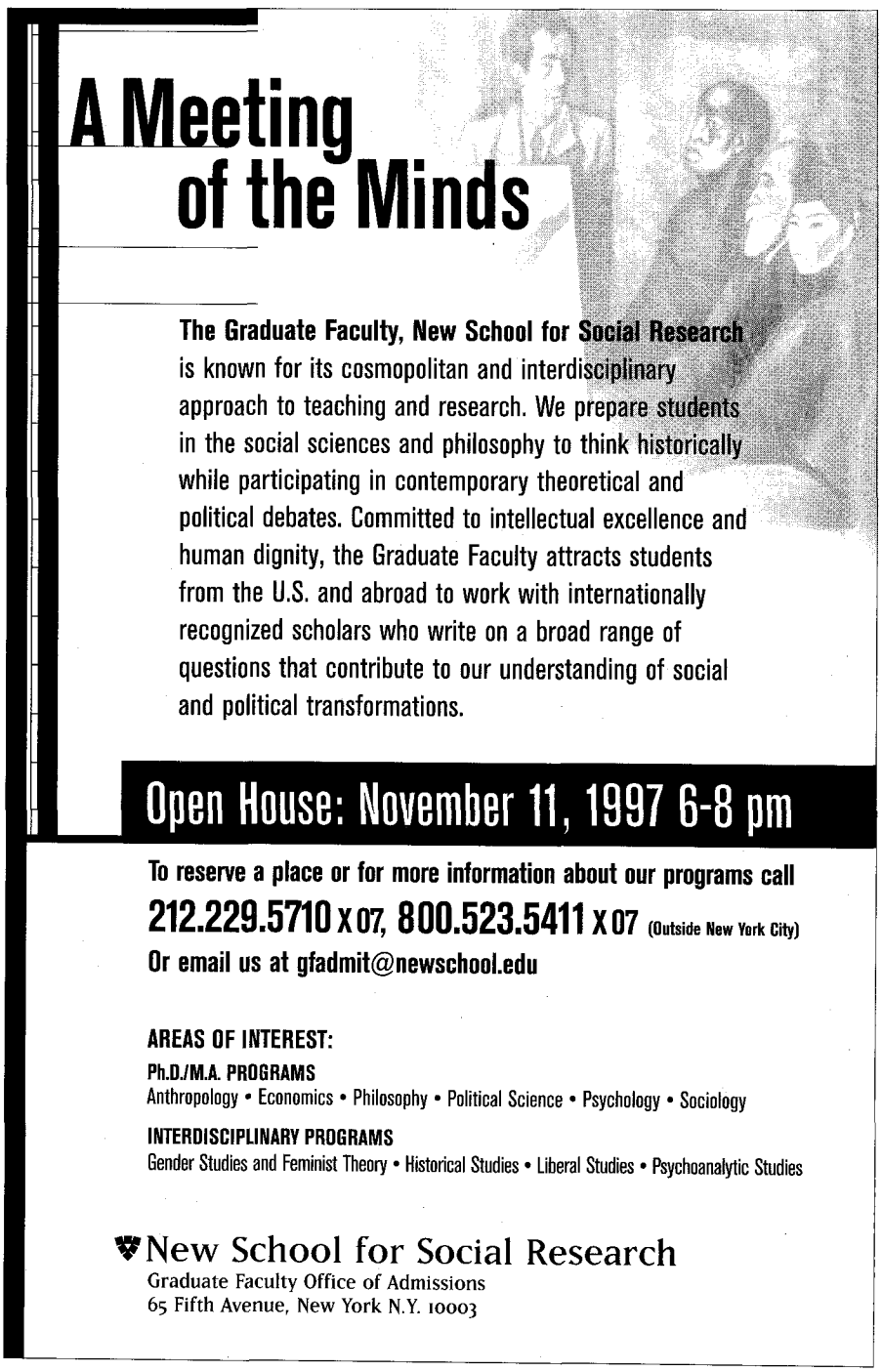
The most far-reaching scandal narrated by Jones has nothing to do with masochism and everything to do with the irresponsibility of scientists and foundation officers. Perhaps they admired Kinsey's message. More likely, they were unwilling to admit a mistake. Whatever the reason, they abused every canon of proper scientific procedure to support research that, for all its volume, was as shallow as it was sensational. In endorsing Kinsey, his backers were endorsing the idea that sexual repression was a bad thing—a proposition for which scientific evidence is, to say the least, lacking.

As it turns out, a group of contemporary scientists has developed the accurate samples that Kinsey never did. *The Social Organization of Sexuality*, by Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels, appeared in 1994; and while it is not the last word on American sexual habits, it is a far more reliable guide than *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Anticipating the kind of reception that Kinsey received, the authors wrote a technical version of their book for a university press and, with the help of a journalist, a popular version designed for the best-seller lists. Best-sellerdom never came to pass. And the reason was quickly obvious. When social scientists tell the real truth about sex, they are telling people—whose own experiences, after all, constitute the story—what they already know.

In the realm of sex, Laumann and his colleagues found, Americans are boringly conventional. Homosexuality is roughly as common as most people think it is: 2.8% of men think of themselves as gay, 1.4% of women. Adultery is quite uncommon: 90% of married women and 75% of men report monogamy. Very few Americans are attracted to, or interested in, passive anal intercourse, having sex with a stranger, violent sex, or group sex. Sexual athletes—highly promiscuous people with many sexual partners in the course of a year—are very rare. These data are obviously not without flaws. People will often over-report or under-report their sexual experiences, depending on who they are and who they are talking to. Still, the data do seem to show that, for most people most of the time, sex is just one experience among many: pleasurable, valued, important, but central neither to their identity nor to their mental health.

The lesson of the Laumann book is clear. If sex researchers are scrupulous and fair, determined to capture reality as it is, then they will generally find nothing very dramatic to report. If they are attracted however, to the study of sexuality to make a point, then they will distort reality, as Kinsey did, in the service of some larger cause. Sexuality is now a booming academic subject. Many of those engaged in it have points that they wish to make. They want to show that our common categories—homosexual/heterosexual, male/female, normal/abnormal—are arbitrary conventions. Or they want to take the side of the sexually stigmatized. But the most common point is that sex itself is a good thing, which means that restraints on sex are bad.

Whether or not any of these points need to be made is not my concern here. What is true, however, is that the very act of making them distorts the study of sex, for it rules out of order or dismisses out of hand people who willingly accept sexual repression, who think it is right to pass judgment on those who cannot control their sexuality,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who are convinced that human beings were given the gift of sexuality primarily to make children, who believe that some kinds of sexual behavior are joyous and others are sick.

IV.

Among those academic writers who have a point that they wish to make is James H. Jones, who, when all is said and done, treats Kinsey as a hero because he was willing to attack sexual repression. To be sure, Jones writes, Kinsey was a man consumed by demons: "somewhere along the lines, he veered off the path of normal development." Attracted to men, but forced to lead a conventional life, Kinsey was drawn to the study of human sexuality in order to find in science answers to his personal sexual confusion. Yet Jones is enthralled. Comparing his subject at one point to Martin Luther and John Calvin, Jones writes that "if Kinsey's views were amoral, they also reflected a strong dose of common sense." As odd as Kinsey's sexual habits may have been, "his problems, albeit in exaggerated form, were the nation's problems." Kinsey's "great achievement was to take his pain and suffering and use it to transform himself into an instrument of social reform, a secular evangelist who proclaimed a new sensibility about human sexuality."

Since he has a point that he so ardently wishes to make, Jones runs the risk of distorting Kinsey in roughly the same way that Kinsey distorted American sexual behavior. The parallels between Jones and Kinsey are striking. Like Kinsey, Jones has written a book exhaustive—even obsessive—in its detail. Kinsey was one of the first 77 Eagle Scouts in America. The labels he used to classify his gull wasps were three-eighths of an inch by five-eighths. Between 1919 and 1937, he wrote 3,193 pages. His fully developed interview schedule contained a maximum of 521 items. Kinsey completed exactly 7,985 sexual histories. And so on. Jones is a splitter, not a lumper: he classifies Kinsey's output with the same passion for variety and detail with which Kinsey classified gull wasps. "Kinsey thrived on meticulous tasks," Jones writes. So does his biographer.

Precision is a virtue. But in this case it is something else as well. Jones stresses that Kinsey was an expert manipulator of public opinion, a man so taken by his image that he tried to manipulate the reviewers of his books and the stories written about him in the press. "Everything about the book," Jones writes of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, "was designed to impress the reader with the richness of Kinsey's empirical data." In portraying numbers with such exactitude, Jones, too, is engaged in image management. If Kinsey was determined not to leave any stones unturned in his campaign to convince Americans that his approach to sex was scientific, Jones will leave nothing to chance to convince his readers that Kinsey is worthy of epic treatment.

Yet the strongest correspondence between Kinsey and Jones is that both are voyeurs. Jones is as fascinated by Kinsey's sex life as Kinsey was by the sex lives of his 7,895 people. Indeed, Jones's book can be understood as an effort to record Kinsey's sexual history. If, as Jones stresses, Kinsey used his ability to obtain sexual histories in order to exercise power over those he interviewed, Jones will seek even more power by putting the power-hungry Kinsey in his place.

One of the most sensitive methodological issues with which Kinsey had to deal was whether the histories that he obtained were accurate. To ensure their truth, Kinsey went to great lengths. He preferred an interview to a questionnaire, which required him to commit to memory all the questions that he would ask. To assure confidentiality, all transcriptions were carried out in a complex code that only very few people ever learned. No one can ever know whether Kinsey's meticulous methods produced accurate accounts. But we do know one case where the truth of a sexual history can be questioned: James Jones's.

It is important to make distinctions here. The source for Jones's treatment of Kinsey's masochism is the filmmaker who recorded his adventures. If these films are to be believed—and I see no reason why they should not be believed—then Kinsey was a very strange guy. But was he a homosexual? If he was, what kind of homosexual was he? With whom did he have sex? Was he a participant or an observer in those Chicago "tea rooms"? One of the consequences of Kinsey's work is that America is now more open in its discussion of sex. But it was not open while Kinsey lived; and therefore Jones has a choice: he can admit that there are things he will never know about Kinsey's sex life, or he can engage in conjecture. Invariably, he does the latter.

"Despite the injunctions of his religion, despite the vigilance of parents, teachers, and police, and despite the warnings of social hygienists who shaped the sex education programs of his beloved YMCA and Boy Scouts," Jones writes of his subject as a young man, "Kinsey masturbated." And Kinsey, unlike other boys, was moved to extreme self-condemnation when he masturbated. If there is a source for these conclusions, it is the conversations that Kinsey had later in life with Paul Gebhard. But those conversations, at least according to Jones's references, dealt with problems of sexual repression of youth in general rather than with Kinsey's personal behavior. Indeed, the only examples of camp-inspired masturbation cited by Jones deal with people other than Kinsey who attended summer camp in the 1950s, not, as Kinsey did, in 1912 and 1913.

"Falling in love with another man is a defining moment in the life of any homosexual," Jones writes. "Until it happens, many men can deceive themselves about their true sexual identity." For Jones, Kinsey's "defining moment" was his relationship with Ralph Voris. Given the times it would be unlikely that any incontrovertible proof of a sexual relationship between Kinsey and Voris exists. And none does. Kinsey kept a picture of Voris on his desk. He also wrote intimate letters to him, although mostly the intimate details were about his marital sex life. If those letters are amorous, the passion seems to go one way, with Kinsey constantly trying to keep the relationship close, even over Voris's resistance. Two individuals told Jones of a sexual relationship between the men, one of whom added that he too had slept with Kinsey; but their testimony is ambiguous, for one says simply that Kinsey "was in love with Voris from day one," which does not necessarily imply sex, and the other only thinks that he knows when a homosexual relationship between the men began, which means he is guessing. And in any case both did not want their names used and are cited as "anonymous." Thus their testimony cannot be checked.

Other sources are cited by name. One of them called attention to Kinsey's exhibitionism. Another described a night when Kinsey was in a foul mood because he and his students slept in a hotel. "Griped and sulked about everything," he wrote in his diary, "I guess because he couldn't sleep in his damn, prick nibbling tent." This observer, Jones comments, usually meant what he said, so that we should take "prick nibbling" as a literal description of what went on. Kinsey sent erotic books to this man as well. All of them dealt with heterosexual sex, but this was "entirely in keeping with Kinsey's approach," Jones writes.

Does all this add up to definitive proof that Kinsey was, as Jones insists, "homosexual"? Hardly. For one thing, Kinsey was a married man with four children, all of which suggests that, if he was

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attracted to men, he was also bisexual. And Kinsey may have been satisfied by prattle, rather than by actual contact. By insisting that the category "homosexual" applies to Kinsey, Jones uses a term whose meaning has been shaped in the 1980s and 1990s to describe conduct that took place more than half a century earlier. A historian more sensitive to evidence and to the texture of the times should have more respect for ambiguity.

About the camping trips, at least, there is evidence of homosexual attraction, however inconclusive. When Jones writes about Kinsey's research in Chicago, however, he steps over a line into irresponsibility. He informs his readers that Kinsey sought sexual release in the underground gay scene, even though he cites no sources. And when he does cite a source—a letter that Kinsey wrote to Voris—he notes that Kinsey avoided any mention of any sexual adventures. Bereft of data, Jones turns surreal: "Although it is highly unlikely that he abandoned himself to those outings very often, Kinsey must have relished the arrangement." Absent any data, Jones cannot know anything. And so he should not say anything.

One's first impulse is to charge Jones with sensationalism so as to sell books. But the odd way in which Kinsey's life and Jones's scholarship intertwine suggests another explanation. For Jones, Kinsey was engaged in an effort to overturn a "Victorian" sexual code. Yet Jones fails to appreciate what Steven Marcus has called the "other Victorians," such as the author of *My Secret Life*, who, like Kinsey, recorded sexual adventures of all kinds. Since Kinsey did have a secret life, he was as much a Victorian as he was a rebel against Victorianism. And since Jones is so determined to uncover Kinsey's secret life, he, too, is more Victorian than he realizes.

There are many ways to be obsessed with sex. One is to suppress it. The other is to find it everywhere—and if it is found to be homosexual or in any way "deviant," so much the better. All of which suggests that Kinsey's contribution to America's sexual revolution is more ambiguous than it appears. The usual way in which these things are treated—certainly the matter is treated this way in Jones's book—is to suggest that different historical periods are characterized by different degrees of sexual openness. As society swings from repression to liberation, not only are people freer to express their sexuality, but individuals with sexual tastes outside the mainstream experience less pain and suffering.

But there is another way to read the events since Kinsey's day. It is to suggest

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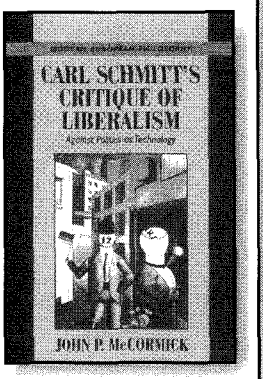

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that Americans have always been consistently conventional in their private sexual behavior and consistently fascinated by public accounts of other people's sexuality. Obviously there have been times when American sexual manners changed: the Pill clearly transformed the rules of sexual engagement, though even in this case the 1990s are witnessing a return to more conventional sexual patterns. From this perspective, what we call a sexual "revolution" is not so much a change in actual behavior as a shift in cultural emphasis, in public consciousness about sexuality.

And even such a shift does not involve a swing from a time when sex is at the center of public consciousness to a time when it is at the periphery. In America, sex is never at the periphery. Sometimes the American fascination with sex tends to result in prohibition and censorship, while at other times it produces exhibitionism and curiosity. Sex can be a force for procreation and joy, and it can be a force for chaos and irresponsibility. Americans make their peace with both sides of sex by varying their public representation of it while changing their private practice of it as rarely as technology will allow.

Alfred C. Kinsey—the Midwesterner, the family man, the product of a proper Christian upbringing, the scientist—grew up in an atmosphere of sexual repression and led a revolution for sexual openness. But how much really changed? Father and son were linked in ways that neither could appreciate, for neither was capable of accepting sex as just a part of life: no more, no less. It is in this sense (and it is absent from Jones's book) that Kinsey was a representative American. Once we had Anthony Comstock and Maria Monk. Now we have Jesse Helms and Karen Finley. It is a cliché to say that the censors and the exhibitionists need each other; but it is also true that they do not understand each other. The censors hear about public accounts of sexuality and believe that people are actually doing such things in their bedrooms. And the exhibitionists listen to the censors and believe that people will, if the censors get their way, stop doing whatever they are doing in the privacy of their bedrooms. Neither seems all that much concerned with what actually happens behind the closed doors. For what goes on there is more interesting to the parties involved than it is to all those trying so desperately to listen in. And that is why it is fitting that those doors stay closed. •

The Obelisks' Tale

By Anthony Grafton

Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism by Jan Assmann

(Harvard University Press, 276 pp., $29.95)

Go to Rome, and you will find yourself in Egypt. In Bellini's enormous oval piazza before St. Peter's, and amid the swarms of tourists in the Piazza Navona, and in the street by the Lateran, there rise obelisks. Most of these huge stones have spoken more than one language. Shaped to celebrate the appearance of the sun god Re, they usually bear hieroglyphic inscriptions that commemorate the achievements of Egyptian pharaohs. Centuries after these great rulers and their kingdom turned to dust, their monuments were brought, with great technological ingenuity and at fantastic expense, from Egypt to Rome. In this new setting, they attested to the power of the Roman conquerors who had brought the oldest of human civilizations under their control.

In the centuries after Rome fell, so did almost all the obelisks. Only one of them, the Vatican obelisk, survived the Middle Ages standing. No ancient historian explained exactly what this column had meant, as first cut in Egypt or as appropriated in Rome. It had no hieroglyphic inscription (not that anyone could have read one). But Christian memory supplied a new context and a new meaning for the blank stone shaft. Originally located in the Circus of Nero, the obelisk had witnessed the Crucifixion of St. Peter. It had, in fact, soaked up his blood, becoming a precious relic of the early Church. The Vatican obelisk gradually became an uncanny, even magical object. Tour guides reported that Virgil had teleported it to Rome from Jerusalem, where it had originally formed part of Solomon's Temple.

In the late Renaissance, Pope Sixtus V moved the Vatican obelisk from its old position to the one in which it now stands, and began erecting others in squares around the city. This staggeringly difficult job, carried out by Domenico Fontana, Sixtus's favorite architect, required the joint efforts of hundreds of men turning dozens of capstans. It turned into a massive media event, celebrated by rituals, poems, and pamphlets too many to count. But it was not without its paradoxes.

Sixtus V became a legend not for his interests in cultural history but for his austerity and his determination. (Legend recalls that he entered the conclave after the death of his predecessor bent over and supported on a stick, which he hurled away as soon as his colleagues had elected him on the assumption that he was too feeble to serve for more than a few years.) He improved Rome's public finances, assured its water supply, and attacked the longstanding problems of banditry in the countryside and prostitution in the city. (Predictably, he had more success with the former than with the latter.) He also straightened roads to make Rome the stage for a magnificent series of processions which emphasized the universalist claims and enormous resources of the Church Militant. When Sixtus moved obelisks, he used them to provide dramatic markers for the new processional routes. Formally exorcised, surmounted with a cross, and explicated with inscriptions, they now gave testimony to the triumph of the religion of Christ over the diabolic superstition and magic of the Egyptians.

What place could Egypt have—except as the object of abuse—in the triumphant projects of a church that, a few years after Sixtus V died, would burn Giordano Bruno alive in the Campo de' Fiori when he persisted in calling for a revival of the Egyptian religion? The answer is, quite a prominent one. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Athanasius Kircher was advising Bellini as he mounted smaller obelisks on his sculptured fountain of the Four Rivers in the Piazza Navona and on an elephant before Santa Maria sopra Minerva. In the eclectic spirit of high Baroque culture, Kircher saw the obelisks not as the work of the devil but as the remains of the lost high philosophy of the Egyptian priests. He celebrated their hieroglyphs as a language more profound than any alphabetic one—a language created by priests, the signs in which corresponded directly by their very nature to the things they referred

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to. And he celebrated their theology, which he imagined as a philosophically sophisticated form of pantheism, rather than the polytheistic idolatry for which Moses denounced the Egyptians in the Bible.

In Rome, Egypt was in. And it would stay in, despite the mania for things Etruscan that seized Italy in the early eighteenth century. Great works of Egyptian art, out of Africa, came to form the jewel at the heart of Western Europe's grandest urbanistic lotus. The complexes of sculpture and inscriptions that framed them emphasized their strange origin and the miraculous profundity of their pictorial script. They make the most pointed of reminders that "Western civilization," whatever it may be, does not consist only of the creations of Greeks and Romans.

A series of erudite scholars with a taste for complex mysteries—from the great art historian Karl Giehlow, working in Vienna at the turn of the century, through Paul Oskar Kristeller, studying Florentine and Roman manuscripts in the 1930s, to the Egyptologist Erik Iversen and the cultural historian Frances Yates, writing in the 1960s—have wondered how Egypt found so prominent and comfortable a place in the citadel of Catholic orthodoxy. And they have devised explanations that commanded assent, until recently, from the scholarly community.

In the second century AD and later, an age of religious and philosophical syncretism, Egypt lost its political independence, but retained its reputation for antiquity and profundity. Neo-Platonists, writing in Greek, produced a whole series of texts that purported to unveil the ancient secrets of Egypt. A set of short dialogues ascribed to the ancient sage Hermes Trismegistos claimed to offer the original revelations about philosophy and theology that Plato had vulgarized in his own longer and less accessible dialogues. A series of explanations of hieroglyphs by one Horapollo explained that each character was a symbol chosen for its inherent connection to the thing it stood for. (The serpent biting its own tail, for example, expressed the cyclical nature of the year more profoundly than any ordinary word could.) These texts differed on many points, but they coincided in their spuriousness, and in the air of conviction with which they insisted that the ancient Egyptian priests had been in possession of profound knowledge, which they had done their best to conceal from profanation by ordinary Egyptians and all others.

Rediscovered in the fifteenth century, these late antique pieces of mock-Egyptian kitsch seemed genuine—and, accordingly, older and deeper than the genuine Greek texts also being rediscovered by European intellectuals at the same time. Except for a few details of setting and local color, the view of Egypt that they offered was entirely false. But they excited influential philosophers such as Marsilio Ficino, who believed for a time that Hermes had created the perennial tradition of idealist philosophy to which he and Plato also belonged. And they excited great patrons such as Cosimo de' Medici, who asked Ficino to stop work on his grand project to turn all of Plato into Latin so that he could translate Hermes first.

These seductive texts soon made their way into print, with eye-catching blurbs. (In the first edition of Hermes, the author himself promised the reader on the title-page, that "whoever you are, grammarian or orator or philosopher or theologian, I will give you much pleasure and profit for little money.") Artists, intellectuals, and monarchs all loved Horapollo's hieroglyphs, which could be worked up into spectacular heraldic celebrations of a ruler's virtue. Dürer used them prominently in the huge woodcut *Triumphal Arch* that he produced for the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I.

A kind of Egyptomania, in short, seized Europe in the period around 1500—a belief, widely and sincerely held, that the origins of philosophy, theology, and science lay in ancient Egypt. It was, as Yates explained in her great book *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, something of an intellectual revolution. Unlike more modern revolutions, it faced backwards, and it rested on misdated and misascribed texts. Still, the first Egyptian revival had radical consequences. It inspired radical prophets of social and religious reform, controversial seers such as Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella.

These beliefs—as Iversen and Giovanni Cipriani have shown—gradually infiltrated the most respectable sectors of European society, notably the papal Curia itself. Even Sixtus V, who insisted on having his obelisks aspersed with holy water to cast out their devils, admired the brilliance of the Egyptians who had been able to carve such great stones. When he learned that the Danish politician and scholar Heinrich von Rantzau had learned how to make limestone obelisks and had set them up on his estates, Sixtus was filled not with horror but with admiration. Kircher, whose early encounter with an illustrated book about obelisks shaped his entire intellectual life, convinced Popes Urban VIII, Innocent X, and Alexander VII that the obelisks were the remains of a laudable priestly civilization, a culture that deserved to form the central theme of the Roman cityscape.

The use of the obelisks thus makes a wonderful case in point of the artistic productivity of error. When Egyptian art came back to life in Rome, it took root in ground well-fertilized by the belief, as popular as it was wrong, that the obelisks bore the record of a philosophical monotheism that the Egyptian priests had concealed from their own uncivilized fellow-countrymen. The texts, as always, hung before the eyes of the intellectuals who tried to interpret the obelisks as objects. Thus Egypt could play a splendid role in Europe—as long as it was interpreted, anachronistically, in European terms.

For all its neat, ironic clarity, this explanation has recently begun to seem unsatisfying. Students of late antique Egypt, such as Iversen himself in his more recent work, and Garth Fowden, have shown that the Hermetic texts and the emblems of Horapollo contained more genuine Egyptian elements than earlier scholarship recognized. Their authors were not dilettantish syncretists whose version of Egypt had all the historical validity of the Epcot Center; they were sincere believers in the superior validity of their shattered Egyptian tradition. And so these texts can no longer brusquely be dismissed as curiosities. To any historian interested in how the Egyptian tradition flickered out in its dark last centuries, their "vision of the vanquished" matters as much as the hybrid codices produced in New Spain matter to historians of Meso-American society and culture.

Martin Bernal, who drew on some of this scholarship, went farther than anyone in laying out what he saw as its implications. The content of the *Hermetic Corpus*, he argued in the first volume of his provocative *Black Athena*, was in large part genuinely Egyptian. And the early modern scholars who had seen these texts as the sources of Greek philosophy were in large part correct. The "Ancient Model" of cultural history—the one believed in by Kircher—matched the historical facts better than more modern German models, the work of scholars who, for reasons of racial and cultural prejudice, insisted on the autonomy of Greece and denounced the *Hermetica* as spurious. Kircher might have had justice on his side, after all, when he proclaimed the cultural authority of Egypt over Greece.

Jan Assmann's brilliant study of *Moses the Egyptian* takes this argument at least two steps further. World-renowned as a

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specialist on Egyptian texts, beliefs, and rituals, Assmann, who teaches at the University of Heidelberg, combines great technical virtuosity in his chosen field with wide—very wide—theoretical and comparative interests. No one has done more than Assmann to open up the *hortus conclusus* of the German university to new questions and new methods. He has now mounted a commando attack on the whole question of Egypt's role in Western cultural history. Elegantly argued, impressively documented, and written in eloquent English, *Moses the Egyptian* offers challenging new findings on the early history of monotheism, and a new reading of the place of Egypt in modern Western culture—and it puts both into the larger context of a theory of cultural memory. Though the relations between history and myth have captured much scholarly attention in recent years, no one has thought harder or written better than Assmann about how, as he says, "history turns into myth as soon as it is remembered, narrated, and used, that is, woven into the fabric of the present."

Like Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and others who have recently explored the nature of memory and history in the modern world, Assmann attacks the set of problems that Freud made notorious in *Moses and Monotheism.* What forgotten histories connect the earliest history of monotheism, Israel, and Egypt? Who invented what? Who slandered whom? In the memories of Israel, as we all know, Egypt meant polytheism, magic, darkness. In the memories of Egypt, as Assmann shows, the Jews came to be associated with impurity, the disease of leprosy, and attacks on the Egyptian religion. How did these views take shape? What real beliefs and practices, if any, did they commemorate?

Assmann's book begins with a lucid, wide-ranging effort to connect these partly symmetrical rejections of one religion by another. He follows a sinuous path, sometimes backward into the Egyptian past, sometimes forward into the Hellenistic age. The Egyptian ruler Akhenaten—Pharaoh Amenophis IV—carried out a religious revolution in the fourteenth century BC. He closed the temples of the Egyptian gods, had their images destroyed, and forbade the celebration of their festivals—the continual round of feasts by which Egyptians confirmed their identity as citizens of a particular town and worshippers of a particular god. In place of the practices that had structured Egyptian lives, which Akhenaten forbade, he established the worship of a single god of light. For the first time in human history, a religious reformer created a rigorously monotheist dispensation. By those whom it had cast into despair, it was remembered as a time of darkness, pollution, and disease. By its creator, it was understood to be the result of a precise act of clarification, the drawing of a line between error and truth.

Later, in Palestine and Egypt, two traditions formed. On the one hand, the Jews created—in some part from the ingredients assembled by Akhenaten—a monotheistic religion. They portrayed this as in every way the radical opposite of the religion of Egypt—the worship of Apis, the Golden Calf. As radically as Akhenaten, and more explicitly, they built a new religion by condemning and inverting the beliefs and the observances of an old one. And they linked the crystallization of their cult with their own emergence from the land of Egypt—by which they referred to the period in the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BC when the Hyksos, a Palestinian people, ruled Egypt before being driven out. Egypt thus played a double role, the positive source of parts of Israel's beliefs and the negative last on which others were formed.

The Egyptians also remembered that a people from Palestine had ruled in Egypt. In the third century BC, when the priest Manetho wrote an account of Egyptian history in Greek, he described at length how a group of lepers, who would become the Jews, had settled in Egypt, created a new religion that forbade the worship of the gods and otherwise inverted Egyptian beliefs and practices, and briefly conquered the country. In Egypt, memories of Akhenaten and the Hyksos interfered with each other, gradually fusing into a single, polemical account of early Jewish history and the origins of the Jewish religion.

The late Amos Funkenstein and David Biale have suggested that some histories—such as Manetho's history of the Jews' invasion of Egypt—are actually "counter-histories," histories deliberately written to invert an enemy's standard account of great events. Assmann does not agree with them about Manetho. But he applies their idea, creatively, to the new monotheisms of Akhenaten and Moses. He argues that these were new because they were "counter-religions." Akhenaten and Moses defined their religions by reference to existing complexes of beliefs and practices, which they absolutely condemned—Akhenaten attacking his own culture's traditions and Moses those of the Egyptian enemy. In a world in which most people regarded religions as translatable and the names of gods as interchangeable, Egyptians and Jews erected the first religions that insisted on their own uniqueness, on the impossibility of admitting that they shared divinities or rituals with others.

Complex and important though these games of definition by negation were, they do not form Assmann's central theme. A persistent tradition—most modern readers will associate it with Freud, but Assmann traces it back into the ancient world—suggested that the borders between religions and cultures were nowhere near so impermeable as both Jews and Egyptians often claimed. At least one Jewish writer—Artapanos, in the third or second century BC—tried to refute Manetho's slanders by showing that Moses had been no less respectable a figure than Hermes Trismegistos, the founder of Egyptian culture as well as of the Jewish religion. The erudite geographer Strabo agreed that Moses had been an Egyptian. And he insisted that Moses had rejected Egyptian worship of zoomorphic images in favor not of the rituals of Judaism, but of a cosmic religion, according to which one divine being "encompasses us all, including earth and sea, that which we call the heavens, the world and the essence of things—this one thing only is God." Jewish practices such as *kashrut* and circumcision represented not the religion of Moses, but its gradual degradation into superstition. The religion founded on an escape from Egypt could be identified as the purest form of Egypt's own beliefs.

Such beliefs fascinate Assmann. He not only sets out to locate the origins of early monotheism and to analyze its nature; he also seeks to follow the multiple and obscure ways in which memories of these were "encrypted" in later traditions—not remembered in detail, but preserved as complexes of belief and association which could resurface centuries later. Thus the memory of the terrors inflicted by Akhenaten, "encrypted" in the Egyptian tradition, reemerged to give body to late Egyptian hatred of the Jews—and to associate the Jews, in a way that would prove deadly for millennia, with leprosy, corruption, irreligion, and attacks on all good order.

The central encrypted memory that Assmann follows is that of the Egyptian Moses. Indeed, he argues that it inspired a second Egyptian revival, which took place in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By then, as Assmann recognizes, the initial enthusiasm for Hermes Trismegistos and Horapollo had cooled. In 1614, drawing on arguments made by a number of philologists before him, the immensely erudite Huguenot scholar Isaac Casaubon had shown that

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the Hermetic texts could not be old or Egyptian. They were written in a late form of Greek and included quotations from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Kircher, who still found in the Hermetic texts the warrant for his theological interpretation of the obelisks, simply refused to take these philological arguments into account, though he could not refute them.

Later in the seventeenth century, however, a group of English scholars—John Spencer, John Marsham, and Ralph Cudworth, among others—began to try to reconstruct the Egyptian tradition, and to reconfigure its relations to the sacred history of the Jews in a new way. They drew on the ancient texts that "encrypted" the connections, in memory, between monotheism and its Egyptian origins—such as Strabo's description of Moses as a pantheistic Egyptian sage. But they accepted the need to study these writings with philological rigor. They argued that Casaubon had rejected the Hermetic texts in too wholesale a fashion. And they constructed, from fragments that they assembled with fanatical energy and fantastic erudition, a set of new stories about how Moses had created the Jewish religion.

The Christian historians of Israel and Egypt drew—as Assmann shows—on the work of a twelfth-century Jewish predecessor. Moses Maimonides had explained many of the prescriptions of the Jewish ritual law as designed to counter or to prohibit the religious observances of a pagan community known as the Sabians. Though it is timeless in its validity, the Law was originally constructed, detail by detail, to combat the idolatry of the gentiles among whom the Jews used to live, and with which they were familiar. The seventeenth-century Egyptologists read Maimonides with admiration. "If only the Jews of today," wrote Spencer, "who hold the age of this Moses in such esteem, would pay attention to his words!" Yet their methods and their goals differed radically from his. By assembling every detail that they could find about Egyptian religion, they wanted to recreate not an imaginary "counter-community" such as the one that Maimonides had posited, but the real historical world in which Judaism took shape. And by calling back to life the context in which Moses promulgated the Law, they wanted to reveal not only that it was historically contingent, but also that it was entirely obsolete.

Spencer set out to show that Moses had followed the hieroglyphic Egyptian tradition, encoding in his religious law a religious discipline that would impose a higher morality on "the Jewish plebe" and a higher theological message that would appeal to those free of carnal desires. Each observance came from Egypt. But each was changed, in the new dispensation, since it had a role to play in teaching the Jews to see themselves as different from the Egyptians. The sacrifice of the paschal lamb and the bull, for example, symbolically reenacted the distancing of the Jews from Egypt, where the ram and the bull were the sacred symbols of Amun and Osiris. Used in this subversive, curiously proto-Nietzschean way, philology set the apparently timeless commands of Jewish law back into the Egyptian context in which they had taken shape. Under the commands and prohibitions of the Torah lay an erased original: the commands and the prohibitions of the hieroglyphic codes of the Egyptians, which Moses had drawn on even as he inverted them. Spencer's consummate philological skill and extraordinary historical imagination transformed the apparently simple, austere text of the Five Books of Moses into a palimpsest densely pullulating with historical detail.

Spencer said little about the higher theology that the Egyptian Moses taught. This was Cudworth's territory. He reconstructed it, displaying an erudition so vast as to strike terror into the modern heart. (One of Assmann's most engaging qualities as a writer is his enthusiasm for the great magpie nests of tags and texts that these seventeenth-century polymaths created.) Assembling fragments from Strabo, Horapollo, and dozens of other sources, insisting that parts of the Hermetic texts recorded real Egyptian beliefs, Cudworth argued that the Egyptians had believed in a single highest god, both outside the world and identical to it; "*hen kai pan*, One-and-All." The doctrine of the Egyptians, Cudworth argued, passed not only to the Jews, but to the Greeks. It thus formed the core of a Great Chain of Religious Tradition, monotheistic, sublime, and concealed from the vulgar—a tradition that extended back to the earliest period of Egyptian history and forward into the poetry and philosophy of the Greeks. The encrypted memory of Egyptian monotheism lived on, in the work of great scholars who glimpsed historical truths that no one could verify in any rigorous way until Champollion finally deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs.

Cudworth's generous and beautifully worded versions of Egyptian theology remained current in the eighteenth century and after. His book went through a number of editions in English, and it enjoyed the signal honor of being translated into Latin and exhaustively footnoted in Germany. Some readers handled his text and its companions pretty roughly. John Toland and others used the theories of Spencer and Cudworth to support Deist and Spinozist attacks on Christianity that would have horrified the pious seventeenth-century students of Egypt. But their theses lived. They enjoyed special popularity in Freemasonic circles, where they inspired more than one Egyptianizing hymn to the true God. Cudworth still inspired Romantic poets and romantic philologists in the early nineteenth century. Beethoven himself wrote "I am all that is," the phrase that he saw as the core of Egyptian theology, on a sheet that he framed and kept on his desk as a source of inspiration. Even Freud, Assmann argues, moved in the same circle of ideas and beliefs when he too tried to work out why the figure of Moses was accompanied by so many memories of Egypt, of violence, of religious division and counter-division.

These pre-scientific views of Egyptian religion—however kaleidoscopic their form and evanescent their foundations—proved remarkably productive. For all of them contributed to the dismantling of the biblical picture of Egypt and Judaism—a picture that rested on, but also concealed, hidden memories of Egypt as the origin of monotheism and of counter-religion itself. Here Assmann draws on his own professional expertise,

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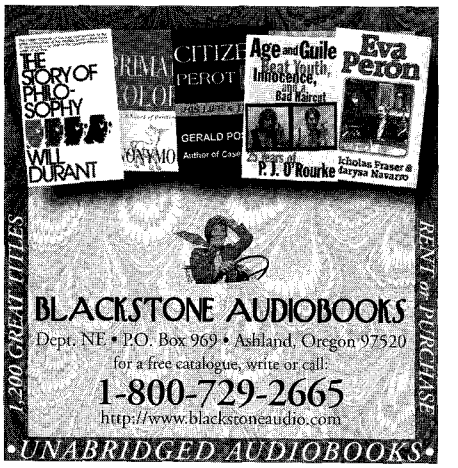

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with stunning results. Offering a close analysis of the Amarna texts, the hymns of Akhenaten's new religion of light, Assmann shows how closely his cosmology really corresponded with the Egyptian doctrine of "One-and-All" that Cudworth reconstructed from late Greek fragments.

The early modern Egyptologists, for all their exaggerations, were right on the main points—from the sacred, esoteric nature of the characters in which the Egyptians wrote their secret texts to the monotheist contents of some of them. Working without direct knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, men of the library rather than travellers or antiquaries, they put their pale, shaking fingers on a magnificent, sophisticated pantheism that really was created in ancient Egypt, and really did survive, in fragments, for centuries afterwards. True, they were wrong to ascribe this system to Moses—whose monotheism, as Assmann carefully explains, differed in vital ways from that of Akhenaten. But their prescience commands respect, even awe.

Now and then Assmann slips into the booby traps that any new field presents to those exploring it for the first time. His readings of early modern intellectual history are not as subtle or as precise as his readings of Egyptian texts, and they are sometimes marred by minor errors of translation and citation. More than once he misses an opportunity to pursue a fascinating individual or issue. One would love to have his views on the learned Paul Ernst Jablonski, mythographer and member of the Berlin Academy, who tried in 1752 to connect the encrypted theology of the ancient Egyptians to the religion and philosophy of the *Vedas*, newly accessible to Europeans. He described these as the work of Brahmin "disciples of the ancient Egyptians." One would also like to have a clearer sense of exactly what mechanisms—from oral transmission and ritual to textual study—actually account for the survival of encrypted moments of the past and for the dramatic returns of these repressed episodes and ideas.

In the end, moreover, as Assmann acknowledges, he has followed only a few strands in the enormously complex story of what Egypt did for Europe. The sheer antiquity of Egyptian civilization, for a start, has done much to startle and to stimulate Western intellectuals. Plato used the greater age of Egyptian culture to show that Greek myths about the past were foolish stories told by provincials who had lost their historical memories. Centuries later, Isaac La Peyrère used the same idea to argue that the account of ancient history given by the Hebrew Bible rests on only partial and provincial knowledge of the past. Though Assmann recognizes the importance of these issues, he does not explore the scholarly literature in which they were most intensively pursued in the sixteenth century: the works of men such as Joseph Scaliger, on whose research Spencer and Marsham drew.

Still, *Moses the Egyptian* lucidly synthesizes an enormous amount of new information about the history of both Israel and Egypt. It provides a model of how to combine, in a wonderfully productive way, the examination of complex historical problems and the history of scholarship about them, somewhat in the manner made famous by Arnaldo Momigliano. And it sketches out a model of cultural transmission that is subtler, and better adapted to the vagaries of memory and forgetting, than the models that historians normally use. Assmann's theory of cultural memory has room for the recorded and the apparently forgotten, for the written records we have and the faint, distant echo of the older written records that they were meant to replace. He makes good use of Freud's notion of latency to analyze these processes, but he also finds a rich terminology of his own to evoke their strange logic: "Cultural memory is rich in crypts and dark spaces. Discoveries and reemergences are always possible and prevent intellectual history from proceeding on a simple path of unilinear evolution."

Unlike Bernal, who has devised a wild philology of his own to rewrite the cultural history of the Mediterranean, Assmann skillfully turns normal philology against itself, using the critical tools of humanism to save the texts they were created to destroy—exactly as his heroes, Spencer and Cudworth, did in their day. He replaces the cool irony of previous accounts of late antique Egyptophilia and early modern Egyptology with an edgy, appreciative warmth. Anyone who has suffered through the sterile debates about "the Western canon" will encounter with delight Assmann's form of cultural history. It simply assumes, without self-righteous rhetoric, but with immense learning, that the borders between Mediterranean cultures were both a fortress and a souk, a place of combat and a place of exchange. No one who follows all the threads of this subtle, fine-drawn history will ever read the Bible or Freud, the *Hermetic Corpus* or the religious history of the eighteenth century in the same way again—or be surprised to find Egypt in Rome, or in Jerusalem.

ANTHONY GRAFTON's new book, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, will be published by Harvard University Press in December.

London Calling

BY DAVID A. BELL

The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century by John Brewer

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 721 pp., $40)

For many British historians, the past used to be a pretty dismal place. In particular, for such leading figures as Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, and E.P. Thompson, it seemed to offer mostly a somber sight of class oppression, lightened only by brief flashes of resistance. The quintessential historical image of the 1960s was the sober cover illustration of Thompson's masterpiece, *The Making of the English Working Class*: a crude nineteenth-century engraving of a soldier on horseback viciously sabering protesters during the "Peterloo" massacre of 1819. It called to mind Shelley's savage poem "England in 1819," which might almost have stood as an epigraph for this entire generation of historical studies: "Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,\ But leech-like to their fainting country cling, \ Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—\ A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field." The hope these history books expressed was much the same as Shelley's, too: for the flashes of resistance to spark a giant wind of change.

Fast forward to the 1990's, and the field has shifted almost beyond recognition, well illustrating the truism that every generation rewrites history to suit itself. As with Thompson, the cover of perhaps the most influential recent work of British history—Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, which appeared in 1992—shows a picture of

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poor civilians and soldiers with drawn swords. But in this illustration, from around 1800, the swords point harmlessly and triumphantly skywards, while united crowds gather around a statue of Britannia to celebrate a victory of Nelson's, in accordance with Colley's thesis that a true national consensus took shape in this period that once seemed so wholly dark and conflict-ridden. The emblematic poet of Colley's book is not a rebel such as Shelley, but the patriotic James Thomson, and she opens her first chapter by quoting his most famous words: "Rule Britannia, rule the waves,/ Britons never will be slaves."

Colley's powerful and elegant study of British nationalism was anything but a piece of British boosterism, but it is still true that her generation of British historians puts more emphasis on what John Brewer, in the concluding lines of *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, calls "dynamism, variety and exuberance" than on conflict and oppression. If the earlier generation steered its research toward the poor, and the brute facts of economic and social inequality, the newer one—whose leading lights also include David Cannadine, Roy Porter, and Simon Schama—has more interest in the aristocracy and the middle classes, in high culture, consumer society, and country houses. They have a penchant for artistic evidence as much as statistical evidence.

Significantly, the earlier generation focused on the moments in British history that they saw as most conflict-ridden and open to revolutionary change: the Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century (which they called the "English Revolution"), and the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The newer generation has put the spotlight on periods like the mid-eighteenth century and the heyday of Victorianism, seeing dynamic growth and genuine unity where their predecessors found mostly oppressive complacency. John Brewer himself perfectly illustrates this shift, having written important books that demonstrate the vitality of eighteenth-century popular politics and consumer culture, and the flexibility and the dynamism of the eighteenth-century British state.

In his new book, Brewer takes this historical trend a step further, not only examining, but positively celebrating, the birth of what we now call "high culture" in the eighteenth century. He shows how an arena of "taste" and "refinement" arose that stretched across the arts and letters, from music and painting to novel-writing and theater; but more than that, he portrays the process as an intensely vital and colorful one—a positively carnal one. ("The very study of *virtu*," he writes at one point, "was tainted with sex.")

It is clear that Brewer's subject has thoroughly intoxicated him. His 721 pages are teeming, bubbling, exuberant, effervescent. This is, in short, a very lively book. He has crowded in example upon example, quotation upon quotation, as if to reproduce in prose the sweaty, excited smells and sounds of Covent Garden during a gripping performance, or the Royal Academy during a controversial exhibit of pictures. (And not just in prose: as befits a book about beautiful commercial objects, this book is a beautiful commercial object, crammed with 241 illustrations.) Such a large helping of unrelievedly rich fare poses the danger of surfeit, particularly as Brewer also—inevitably—includes a great deal of familiar material; this is a work of synthesis, based more on secondary literature than original research. Taken in moderate doses, however, *The Pleasures of the Imagination* is a wonderful read, thanks to Brewer's striking ideas, and to his uncanny ability to pick out telling and unfamiliar details even as he scrambles up the best-known peaks of eighteenth-century British culture.

To illustrate the increasingly intimate relations between painting and commerce, Brewer tells the story of the Drury Lane painter who rented a large attic studio, painted one very long continuous landscape, and then, scissors at the ready, sold it off to customers by the foot. To show the narrow profit margins of the provincial book trade, he lists the non-literary products carried by a Dorset bookseller, including "Worm Cakes, Eye-Water and a remedy for Warts." (Elsewhere, bookstores also offered tea, coffee, and sugar, in clear anticipation of Barnes & Noble.) As proof of the connections between acting and prostitution, he offers into evidence the annual *Harris' List of Covent Garden Ladies*, which "gave details of each woman's attractions, mixing graphic description with many hunting metaphors."

Brewer's mission is to show once and for all how little "high culture" owed, in its origins, to stuffy aesthetes who led lives of blameless and boring contemplation. His novelistic fondness is for rogues, rakes, and eccentrics, and he provides character sketches of them in abundance. Of course, all the usual suspects of eighteenth-century English culture are here: Boswell and Johnson, Hogarth and Reynolds, Haydn and Handel, David Garrick and John Gay. Most had foibles quite sufficient to suit Brewer's taste. He dwells lovingly on Boswell's womanizing ("five times was I fairly lost in supreme rapture," the writer boasted of an active night), and on Garrick's egomania (the famous actor and theatrical impresario had his portrait painted or engraved no less than 450 times).

But Brewer does best of all with lesser-known figures, such as the connoisseur and antiquarian William Hamilton, who travelled to Italy to study one of the last living cults of Priapus, and had his wife Emma Hart pose in classical costume to imitate Greek statuary and the paintings of Pompeii. "Emma Hart, as she herself recognized," Brewer comments wryly, "had been completely objectified." (Preferring more active entertainments, she later absconded with Nelson.) Brewer also rescues from obscurity the middle-class Anna Larpent, whose voluminous journals record her somewhat obsessive efforts at cultural self-fashioning: on one typical day in 1792, there were two chapters of *The Rights of Man* before breakfast, followed later by scriptural readings, trips to see a kangaroo and a "Polygraphic Exhibition," and a play at Covent Garden. (She deserves a place of honor in the sacred history of the "Arts and Leisure" section.) And Brewer writes poignantly about the painter Ozias Humphry, who despite his remarkable technical skills in miniature never succeeded on a large canvas, struggled with steadily declining sight, tried and failed to make his fortune in India, copied Old Masters, traded paintings on the side (including a putative Raphael), and lived out his cantankerous old age "exchanging recipes for quack medicines with his aging friends and bothering aristocrats with importuning letters."

More important to Brewer than any single personage, however, is a city. True, in keeping with current historiographical fashions, he nods dutifully toward the culture of the English provinces, but at these moments his prose turns somewhat sleepy and the book starts to ramble. London remains the center of the action, and the center of the book. Its population reached one million by 1800, by far the largest city in Europe; and its tens of thousands of retail outlets, its thousands of coffee houses, inns, and taverns, heralded the dawn of the consumer age. One-tenth of the English lived there, and fully one-sixth spent part of their working lives there. Poets marvelled at its gaudiness, while Tobias Smollett memorably saw Londoners of all ranks and classes "jumbled together ... rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, jostling, mixing, bouncing, cracking and crashing, in one vile ferment of stupidity and corruption." As Brewer himself says: "London offered a different quality of life. Nowhere else

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in Britain was so urban; no other city quite so exciting and shocking."

It was in London, Brewer argues, that high culture started to take shape, thanks not only to the city's own vitality, but also to the royal family's lack of it. Elsewhere in Europe, in places such as Versailles, Potsdam, and Saint Petersburg, ambitious monarchs were building magnificent new palaces and keeping their own courts the center of cultural life. Britain's kings and queens did little building by comparison, and until the accession of George III in 1760 cared little for the arts and letters. The militaristic and German-born George II positively boasted of his philistinism ("Gun, Drum, Trumpet, Blunderbuss and Thunder" was the way Pope described him). Thus Brewer finds the court, and indeed political life in general, essentially irrelevant to his main story, and barely mentions them after the first chapter.

Instead, it is middle-class urban entrepreneurs and impresarios, "who viewed culture as a commodity to be sold rather than as a means to praise monarchs," whom Brewer places at center stage. His book might almost have been called *The Business of the Imagination*, for he makes the questions of how the artist paid the rent, how the theater acquired the play, and how the novelist found the printer almost as absorbing as the works of art themselves. In one of his most telling passages, he recounts what happened when the monarchy commissioned Handel to compose a *Music for the Royal Fireworks* to commemorate peace with France in 1749. A strutting entrepreneur named Jonathan Tyers secured the right to hold a public rehearsal in his pleasure garden at Vauxhall before the first official performance in Green Park, and staged an extravagant spectacle that earned him gross receipts of over £1500. In comparison, the official performance itself was a dismal flop. The crowds "did not mingle indiscriminately as they had at Vauxhall ... the fireworks, damped by the weather, fizzled and refused to light; there were longueurs during which the crowd grew restless." Finally, one of the pavilions caught fire and burned to the ground.

Just as important as the entrepreneurs, and just as separate from traditional circles of power in Britain, was that nebulous creature, "the public." Unlike earlier generations of courtly patrons, the audiences for eighteenth-century high culture generally had no personal contact with artists and writers. They attended crowded exhibitions and public theaters, read books at home, and followed the guidance of critics (that other new species of the period). The public was as fickle as any courtly patron, but artists and writers increasingly had no choice but to serve it, and with far-reaching consequences. Brewer argues convincingly that when "public opinion" established itself as the ultimate arbiter of British taste, cultural works themselves became seen as forms of public, indeed national property. The critics increasingly demanded that art and literature serve a public purpose, a national purpose; and figures such as Garrick responded, enshrining Shakespeare as the "national poet" and establishing a literary canon that endures to this day. "High culture," in short, had a twin: the idea of a national heritage.

The story line that Brewer emphasizes throughout the book is more or less one of exuberant triumph, of artistic glories and important new cultural forms issuing from a Trimalchio's feast of profit-taking and over-indulgence. It should come as no surprise that Brewer did much of the work on the project in southern California, and he even ventures the occasional comparison between eighteenth-century London and twentieth-century Los Angeles. Still, as he also notes throughout the book, the free-wheeling, rude, rambunctious, and more-than-occasionally pornographic cultural scene of the eighteenth century produced a healthy share of anxiety and disgust among the British as well. Smollett hardly wrote his lines out of uncritical admiration for London; nor did the poet John Bancks, when he described the city with the words "Gaudy things enough to tempt ye/Showy outsides, insides empty." *An Account of the Worship of Priapus*, the book that William Hamilton produced in 1786 with fellow connoisseur Payne Knight, caused a scandal in its time, and the freedom of the theater was greatly curtailed after Horace Walpole read to the House of Commons from a play entitled *The Golden Rump*, which dealt largely with George II's flatulence and hemorrhoids. Further controversies followed in what Brewer himself calls "the prudish and moralizing decades before and during the French Revolution."

Just as anxiety-provoking was the deep dependence of the new high culture on foreigners. Eighteenth-century England might have had a literary tradition to match that of any European competitor, but in the fine arts and music it fell far short, and it needed overseas help to catch up. Handel and Haydn represented only the tip of this particular iceberg. Between 1675 and 1750, no fewer than 83 Italian composers were resident in London. Between the 1720s and 1770s, the British imported from Italy, France, and Holland 50,000 paintings and half a million etchings and engravings, to decorate their walls.

Such dependence could not help but produce a strong reaction in a society which, as Linda Colley has written, possessed a "vast superstructure of prejudice" toward everything foreign, and especially everything French. Patriotic artists such as William Hogarth blasted

Remembering My Visit to Martha's Vineyard Last Winter

Plum cake tart eat I. Drink tea for dessert. Old restaurant
Inn, one night visit there. Difficult walk that place, but house
Up long road, next to sea. I push against wind, sand, dark
Moan ghost. Another time: snow, lightly. Shallow prints make
I walk around alone. Peer through empty windows. Library one day week
Open. I take out thick books. Every morning dress myself thoughtful,
And go down different path to lighthouse. See it as I go along
Bigger, smaller over landscape. Back built low houses. Yards sloping.
Children play at it one day. Fog, and seal lying on many color rocks.
Stare into whiteness I—not see where can go. No place person
Can talk with person. Not mind I. Sometimes car slow down
Two of us smile strange, wave. Not certain. Can think what us? But
Main thing, important, forget say I: Gather deep purple berries see
On breaking fence once I. Touch them, remember, where I am.
How wander here I. Far away, but still home. I sweat then
With long time wetness. See more: distant island, black birds,
Ocean throb under feet. Life came to me. Mine. The other.
I know this: Joy, means door closing, no room in front or behind.
Footsteps not made outside in hall. And a keyhole. Found light.

ANN CLAREMONT LE ZOTTE

—translated, from Sign Language, by the author

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"picture-jobbers from abroad," while a host of cultural critics bemoaned the subjection of manly, freedom-loving Englishmen to effeminate and tyrannical foreigners. Britain's unprecedented defeat in the War of American Independence, and the desperately-fought struggles with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, only strengthened this xenophobic reaction.

In time, these anxieties would have enormous effects on British culture and politics. What the critics feared, above all, was the collapse of established boundaries in the frenetic, commercialized urban spaces where the new high culture emerged: boundaries between social ranks, between native and foreigner, even between men and women. (Eighteenth-century British theater had a virtual addiction to cross-dressing and other forms of gender play.) Already by the end of the eighteenth century, according to the historian Dror Wahrman, the chorus calling for the re-establishment of firm social, sexual, and national divisions, along lines supposedly dictated by nature itself, had become almost overwhelming. The writer Hannah More, who in her youth wrote daring and successful plays that featured cross-dressing heroines, changed by the end of the century into a tireless evangelical promoter of the cult of female domesticity. Other writers trumpeted the "natural" division of society into upper, middle, and lower classes. During the wars against France, British chauvinism and xenophobia grew, if possible, even more full-throated and strident. This cultural reaction shaped the imperial Britain of the nineteenth century just as much as the dynamic, exuberant high culture Brewer describes.

The only real disappointment in this deeply pleasurable book is Brewer's failure to provide a full conclusion, in which he might have given systematic consideration not only to the great achievements of eighteenth-century British culture, but to these anxieties and dark imaginings as well. And a little more attention to politics would have helped. One wishes that Brewer had ventured comparisons not only with twentieth-century California, but with another crucible of cultural modernity, the nineteenth-century city that Carl Schorske described in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna.* There the great whirl of cultural production was even more frenetic, the fears and the dangers much sharper and closer to the surface. Though the comparison with Vienna a century later is certainly of limited value, it would at least underline the fact that the much-indulged-in pleasures of the eighteenth-century British imagination expressed more than dynamism and exuberance. They arose, as Brewer himself shows, out of a society in tremendous, unsettling flux; and if this flux helped beget a high culture that Britons can still glory in, it opened up darker avenues, too. Not so dark, by any means, as those that issued from Vienna. Not so dark, perhaps, as the earlier generation of British historians believed. But worth pondering.

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TRB *continued from page 6*

of Soviet economic "gains." By the time of Gorbachev's ascension, the Soviet Union was as brittle as the "modernizing monarchies" whose dilemmas Huntington had also analyzed. As soon as the Soviet system tried to reform, it collapsed.

Why, then, does the Chinese Communist party still occupy power? The uprising in Tiananmen was, on the surface, a classic Huntingtonian crisis. Urban intellectuals and the urban middle class, newly energized by the openness of Deng Xiaoping's first ten years in power, staged a radical challenge to the one-party state. Unlike Gorbachev, however, the Chinese rulers were willing to quell the challenge with violent repression, and it worked, for reasons Huntington had anticipated. First, Huntington had noted that one-party states which emerged from prolonged struggle (China) would have more determined elites than those which emerged from relatively brief and narrowly based revolutions (Russia). Second, Tiananmen was a student rebellion lacking support in the overwhelmingly rural, and politically inert, population. In such circumstances, Huntington wrote with characteristically brutal objectivity, "[f]or the government interested in the maintenance of political stability, the appropriate response to middle-class radicalism is repression, not reform."

Post-Tiananmen China remains characterized by a relatively low level of political mobilization—the masses seem either apathetic or tranquilized by the fruits of economic growth; the restive intellectuals seem cowed by repression. But China's rulers are wrong to consider this state of affairs as a vindication of their overall strategy. Jiang and his fellow politburo members have actually succeeded only in engineering a transition from communism back to authoritarianism. As a result, they still face a latent Huntingtonian dilemma. Indeed, the eight years since Tiananmen have seen a further acceleration of the movement of people from country to city; Beijing's plans for even greater growth in the future will disrupt settled social patterns even more, and stimulate the rise of even more insistent new social forces. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party has not really increased the legitimacy of its claim to absolute power, or its capacity to adapt peacefully to the demands of Chinese society. Without real political power-sharing, Jiang may be setting the stage for a future Tiananmen—only this one is likely to be larger and more difficult to repress. "We believe that without democracy there can be no modernization," Jiang said in Washington. That was one lie he may not live to regret.

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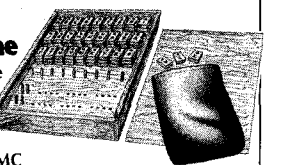
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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Capitalist tools

THE TREMOR IN THE WORLD'S markets happened just as Jiang Zemin was heading to the United States. The panic in Hong Kong must have been especially chilling to him: after all, the prosperity of the former British colony is critical to the economic future of China, because state-owned Chinese companies now raise capital on the Hong Kong exchange. That's exactly what China Telecommunications was doing as everything began to collapse. It took only the downward volatility of the neighboring Asian Tiger markets for subscribers to the new telephone issue to realize they had overpaid. Once some big holders began to sell, others—many of whom had bought on margin—followed. When Telecom stock tumbled, they had to raise cash. In other words, they had to sell their supporting holdings (and fast), which triggered the ultimate unraveling. The underlying reality of all of this, says James J. Cramer (the remarkable money manager who is my partner in *TheStreet.com*, the new financial daily on the Web), is that there is no real free market in China. And this fact distorts the Hong Kong exchange. There are, for example, on this exchange, "red chip" companies, Hong Kong-based subsidiaries of Mainland Chinese companies, in which Beijing invests and to which it gives lucrative contracts. If you know which these are, you know a lot. If you don't, you know almost nothing. What there is, then, is a fixed market that operates like a casino. My guess for the future: the more state-configured Chinese companies there are on the Hong Kong exchange, the less reliable and truthful that exchange will be. This is not good news for China.

INEVITABLY, WHAT HAPPENED IN the Asian exchanges, particularly Hong Kong, had a grim psychological impact on Wall Street. Since the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the U.S. dollar, Jiang is in the unusual position of being a communist leader who must hope that the U.S. currency remains strong. The drop on Wall Street must have spooked him as much as the drop in Hong Kong. Still, the globaloney banalities notwithstanding, ripples are not waves. The essentials of the U.S. economy are strong enough for our securities markets to withstand calamities elsewhere. But China is the most populous country in the world. So its numbers simply dazzle producers of everything and anything, from Pepsi to microchips. Thus, the happiest moments of Jiang's visit to America must have been when he was meeting with businessmen who were eager never to offend. In fact, the White House dinner for him was primarily a collection of corporate executives content for the moment with a symbolic presence in his shadow. Here, in Boston, he met with some 200 executives. And, on Wall Street, he was given the capitalist honor of sounding the opening gong of the New York Stock Exchange. At the close, the Dow was up 60.

THE TWO COMMUNIST societies which have improved their standards of living, China and Vietnam, have done so by pioneering cushy relationships with capitalist enterprises, some local, some foreign. Again, these are not (or not quite) free market paradigms. But they are different enough from old-fashioned central planning that they have made a big difference, and a very big improvement, in how men and women experience their lives, what they eat and what they wear, how they play, even in the colors that surround them. There is, then, an emerging middle class, although, there is almost nothing permitted of middle-class civil society. Capitalism in China and Vietnam, moreover, is not tempered by the ameliorative social norms prevalent in the West. What you have, then, is a new model of control: avaricious capitalism in economics allied with dictatorship in politics. Years ago, this would have seemed an impossible contradiction. But today it may have a future. How else will Fidel Castro survive?

JIANG ZEMIN CAME TO HARVARD, where a committee of four faculty members agreed to vet questions that had been sent by mail and e-mail in advance of his talk at Sanders Theatre. Two of the questions were read by Ezra Vogel, director of the Fairbank Center for East Asia Research, who made it sound as if Jiang was brave even to hear them. But, for all of Harvard's politesse, this was the first place on the Chinese president's American journey where he was in the same room as his political opponents and critics. So chalk this up as his first encounter with some simulacrum of freedom. Jiang's presence also attracted supporters, mostly students from Mainland China, in the U.S. on government handouts and brought to Cambridge by their Washington embassy. They wielded large and elaborate, red and gold banners, one of which read: "President Jiang Zemin, Welcome to Harvard, the U.S.A.'s Number 1 University." The words were in the clumsy vernacular of communist officialdom, and elitist besides.

THE TANKING OF THE MARKETS also dealt a blow to the U.S.A.'s number one investor, George Soros of Soros Fund Management, who runs several "offshore" investment partnerships not available to U.S. citizens. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that five of these vehicles had lost $2 billion of their $19 billion give-or-take-some-change value on the day the market stopped trading twice and closed down over 554 points. His clients pay a lot for such performance. But over the years, they might have done better putting their money in a Fidelity mutual fund.

OF COURSE, GEORGE Soros doesn't manage any of these Soros funds himself, except perhaps to instruct his minions to sell the British pound or buy the U.S. dollar. The actual work he leaves to underlings. He himself does good works, *l'état c'est moi* good works, it is true, but good works nonetheless, especially in the ex-Soviet Union, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in South Africa. Still, it is almost surreal, his mission-like fervor to help developing nations, given his investment habits of the past year or so. He had benefited handsomely by whipping the currencies and markets of poorer countries, then returned to some of these countries to offer his philanthropy. He features himself a citizen of the world. From conversations I've had with him I sense that he finds my passion for things Jewish a bit unworldly and backward. But, then, I find his cosmopolitanism a bit desperate and abstract. After all, he is not the first Jew from Budapest (or Prague, Vienna, or Berlin) with such aspirations. Soros represents a last gasp of the sort of self-immolating universalism in which modern European Jews specialized: he is the Zamenhof of the markets and his Esperanto is money. The problem, of course, is that the cosmopolitanism of individuals must not be mistaken for the cosmopolitanism of the world. For many of the folk Soros has tried to help (in Russia, for example), and for many of the government officials whose countries' currencies he has trashed (Malaysia's, for example), he is not just a financier, he is also a Jew. And he is not just a Jew, he is also an agent of the Zionist conspiracy. Well, as an agent of that conspiracy, I am here to testify to Soros's complete innocence of the charge. Poor man.

MARTIN PERETZ

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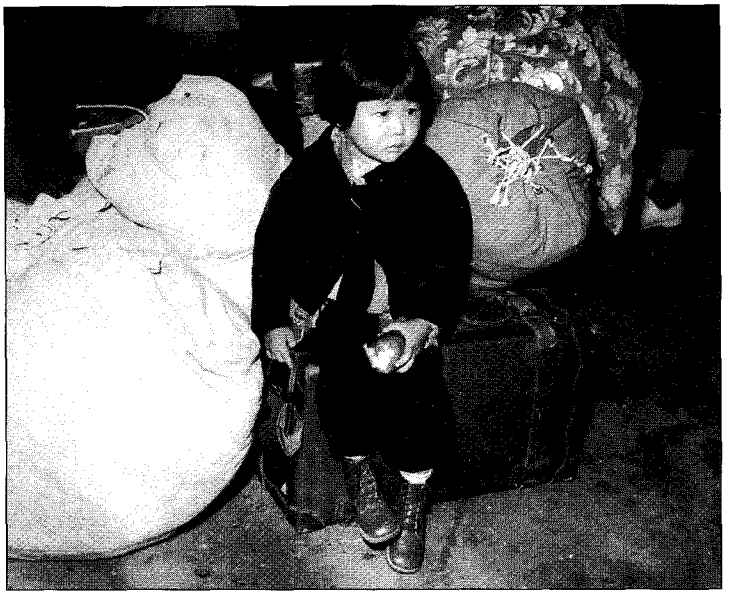
Home Was A Horse Stall



In the dark stall that night, listening to the noises of others who had been forced from their homes, Tsuyako Ishimaru couldn't sleep. She couldn't stop wondering what any of them had done to deserve being penned up in a stable littered with manure. She couldn't believe this was happening in America.

A native-born citizen, Tsuyako listened to the same music, followed the same fashions, and pledged allegiance to the same flag as her white American friends. In better times, those friends had affectionately nicknamed her "Sox."

After the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, Tsuyako was seen as the enemy. She and more than 100,000 other Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps until the end of World War II. Leaving all their possessions behind, they brought only what they could carry.

Armed guards surrounded the camp in Topaz, Utah, where Tsuyako lived. Families shared cramped living quarters. They shivered in temperatures well below zero, and were sickened by the unfamiliar diet of tongue, gizzard and chitterlings. They shared a communal bathroom with six toilets and no doors.

In spite of the hardships, the internees formed social clubs and ball teams, and started camp newsletters. But everywhere they looked, barbed wire, watch towers and police patrols reminded them of their status.

Tsuyako remembers one man picking some wildflowers along the wire at the camp. A guard yelled "Halt!" but the man was hard of hearing. He kept on picking flowers and was shot.

On another occasion, a grandfather playing catch with his grandson went to retrieve the ball from just beyond the fence. The guard who killed him told authorities that the old man was trying to escape.

Tsuyako's experience is an old one. Throughout American history, various groups have been victimized simply for who they were, what they looked like, or what they believed. Many of their stories are told in *The Shadow of Hate: A History of Intolerance in America,* a curriculum kit produced by Teaching Tolerance.

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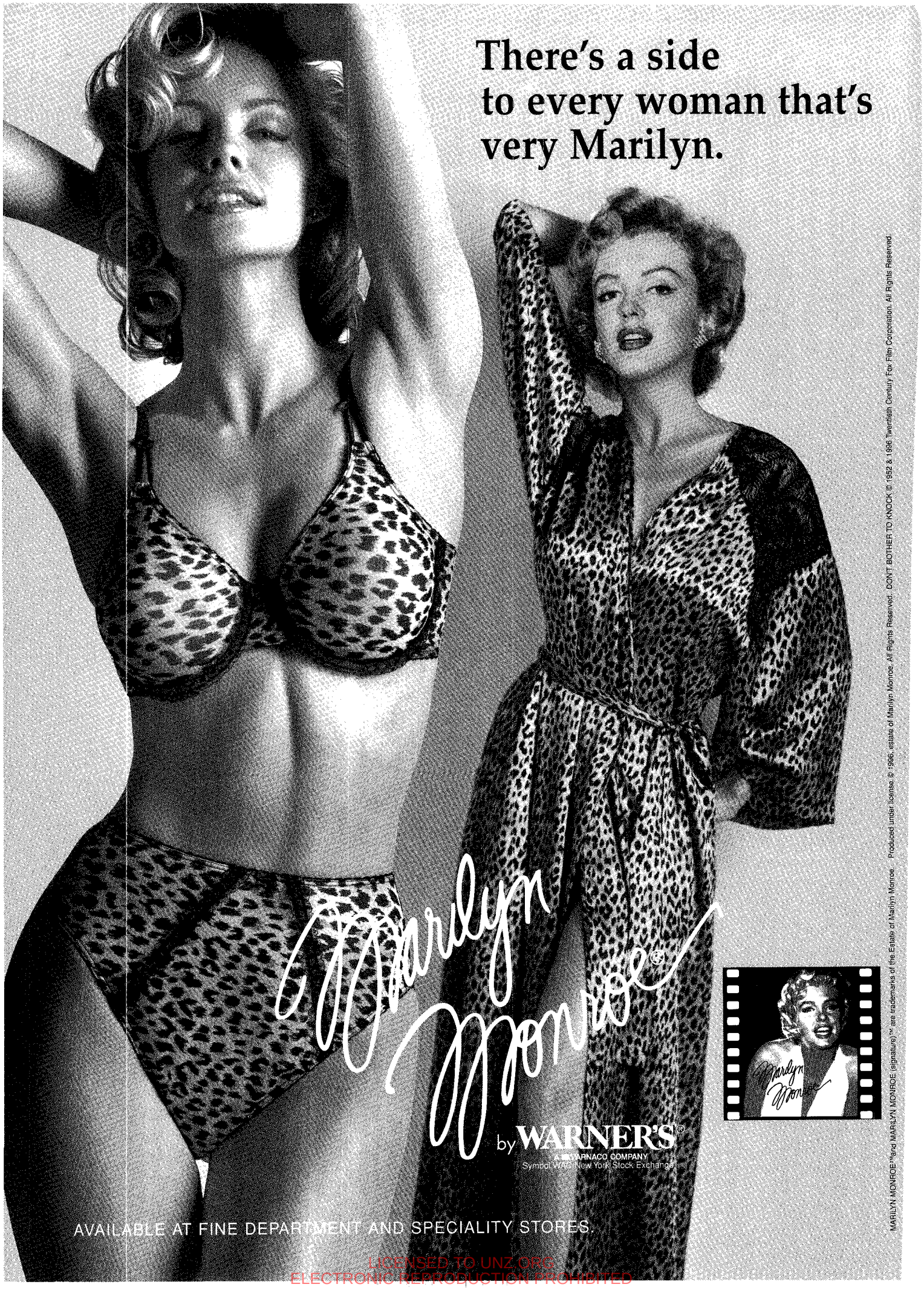
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